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8 May 2017

Mr Tom Pether
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Dear Mr Pether

Short inspection of East Allington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Following your appointment as head of teaching and learning in September 2016, you have acted swiftly and decisively to address key areas of weakness. Your actions have been well focused and have brought about rapid improvement, securing pupils' achievement in mathematics and reading. Your vision for active, bold and caring pupils has been embraced and realised by all. My time spent with staff and pupils confirmed that they feel happy, well supported and valued by school leaders.

Governors demonstrate a precise and accurate understanding of the school's performance. They hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and learning and use assessment information effectively to identify significant actions. This is evident in the immediate response taken to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics and phonics. Leaders and governors take full advantage of the strengths and expertise of staff across other schools within the trust. These actions have been instrumental in securing further improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Throughout my visit, pupils displayed a clear fascination and enjoyment in their learning. They listen attentively to the views of others and use appropriate subject-specific language when engaging in learning conversations with peers. Pupils are

polite, well mannered and spoke to me about their work with confidence and self-assurance.

Nursery staff are appropriately qualified. Leaders ensure that staffing is at the right level to provide appropriate care and supervision. Children have good opportunities to play both inside and outside. Nursery staff have set up the physical environment successfully to maximise opportunities for purposeful and productive play. Children appear happy. They work alongside others, interacting effectively. Nursery staff are attentive to the needs of individuals, providing children with a warm and caring environment. Leaders have ensured that welfare requirements in the early years are met.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are vigilant to the needs of the pupils and ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that action is taken to safeguard pupils. They carry out appropriate checks to ensure that staff, and other adults who are involved in the school, are suitable to work with children. All staff receive timely and appropriate safeguarding training. Consequently, they are quickly alerted to safeguarding issues and use the school's policies and procedures effectively to raise concerns. Leaders have embedded effective processes for identifying vulnerable pupils. They use a range of strategies, including external guidance, when considering what course of action to take.

My discussions with leaders revealed a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families. School documentation shows that leaders act quickly to involve external agencies to ensure the well-being of pupils. Leaders routinely review the quality of support provided to pupils to ensure it is having the desired effect.

Pupils feel safe at school and have a trusted adult who they can go to with a worry or a concern. The staff provide pupils with a caring and supportive environment in which to thrive. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the school's work in keeping them safe. For example, they know that they should not share their personal details with anyone over the internet. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work in keeping pupils safe. All parents who responded to the parent survey agreed that their child feels safe in school and is well looked after. A typical comment written by a parent was, 'Teachers and support staff always show care and attention to the pupils.'

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry related to leaders' actions to raise pupils' achievement in mathematics in key stage 2. In the 2016 tests, pupils did not achieve as well as expected in mathematics. Overall attainment was below the national average. A detailed review undertaken by leaders identified weaknesses in the quality of teaching. It also identified some misconceptions in pupils' subject knowledge and

understanding. Consequently, a range of well-targeted actions have been implemented across the school to ensure pupils make the progress of which they are capable. As a result of this, pupils' books show that they are now making better progress. Our visits to classrooms showed how pupils are quickly acquiring new mathematical knowledge and understanding. This is because they are using a range of visual images, apparatus and jottings to support their learning. For example, a pupil in Year 4 confidently explained to me how he was using a fraction wall to check the accuracy of his work on equivalent fractions.

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are benefiting from a wide range of opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving tasks. Consequently, they are adept at selecting appropriate methods and strategies to arrive at the correct answer. Pupils' books show that those in significant groups, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, are progressing well. They are successfully acquiring skills that are appropriate for their different stages of development. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their individual starting points. This is because teachers plan learning activities that build effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and capabilities. However, you acknowledge that pupils do not routinely demonstrate their mathematical reasoning.
- My next line of enquiry focused on leaders' actions in enabling pupils to reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Leaders' analysis and evaluation of how phonics is taught have resulted in a greater focus on progression and consistency of approach. As a result, pupils' performance in phonics is improving. During our learning walk, we observed good levels of pupils' interest and engagement during phonics sessions. This is because teachers use a range of strategies to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups, including boys. Adults listen attentively to identify and correct any misunderstandings. Their accurate articulation of phonemes enables pupils to grasp new sounds effectively.
- Pupils who read to me did so with a good degree of fluency and accuracy. They applied their phonic knowledge successfully when working out unfamiliar words. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively with reading. Their developing phonic skills give them the confidence and resilience to persevere with tricky words. Pupils' writing books highlight their success in applying their phonic knowledge in their independent writing. Over time, spelling is becoming more accurate and pupils have the self-confidence to attempt more adventurous words.
- My final line of enquiry focused on how leaders' actions are providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. You are continuing to develop a broad, topic-based approach with a clear focus on making the most of outdoor learning. Pupils have access to a comprehensive and engaging curriculum that provides them with a range of exciting learning experiences. Our joint scrutiny of topic books showed that pupils have a wide range of opportunities to excel across the wider curriculum. For example, pupils' achievement in science and art stands out as a strength. This is because they immerse themselves in their learning and apply their skills to the full. Leaders have high expectations for the presentation and quality of handwriting across all subjects. As a result, standards of presentation are high. Pupils' views on the curriculum are very positive. They speak

enthusiastically about the learning they have undertaken and the aspects they have found most enjoyable. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning because their experiences are interesting and varied. Pupils particularly enjoy the forest school and work undertaken in mathematics.

- Pupils' work over time shows that teachers are using cross-curricular links effectively to promote learning. For example, pupils are benefiting from regular opportunities to write for different purposes across a range of subjects. In addition, there is good evidence of how pupils apply their skills in computing. For example, pupils in Year 6 have successfully created informative posters about the artist Andy Warhol, drawing on a range of computing skills. However, pupils do not regularly apply their mathematical skills in other subject areas.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils routinely demonstrate their skills in mathematical reasoning
- pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills across the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Neil Swait
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you, the executive head, staff, pupils and three members of the governing body. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' learning and to scrutinise their work. I also heard individual pupils read in Years 1 and 2.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's development plans, attendance, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 29 responses to the Parent View online survey, and 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.