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Mrs Suki Edwards
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Dear Mrs Suki Edwards

Short inspection of Eastlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 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 school was judged to be good in February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in September 2016, you have galvanised the school community and further developed the nurturing ethos of the school. Moreover, you have raised expectations and provided a sense of purpose to the quality of teaching. There is a strong sense of teamwork among leaders and staff, which plays a pivotal role in securing a good standard of education. Parents are unanimous in their support of the school and many share the view that the school has renewed drive since your arrival. As one parent put it: 'My child is confident, happy and making great progress. The new headteacher communicates well.' As a result of the strong partnership between governors, leaders, staff and parents, pupils enjoy school and achieve well.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. You and the staff provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to understanding safety and develop life skills. For example, pupil 'e-cadet leaders' teach other pupils about staying safe online and 'anti-bullying ambassadors' support other pupils' understanding of bullying. The ambassadors have also held 'kindness day' and 'appreciation day' to promote values to other pupils. You have also developed the 'kids in the community' strategy where pupils have helped in a care home, learned sign language and promoted safe parking outside of school. Furthermore, the school council went on a trip to London

to see the Houses of Parliament which helped to deepen their understanding of democracy. As a consequence of these opportunities, pupils have strong leadership skills and a deep sense of values.

Pupils enjoy their learning because the curriculum is interesting and varied. Pupils are set learning challenges which excite them. This was reflected in a pupil comment in Year 6: 'I really enjoy our topics. We have been asking the question, who were the Mayans and what did we learn from them?' Pupils develop a broad range of skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects. You rightly identified that science required greater focus and the recent science week deepened pupils' understanding of the subject. Staff plan relevant trips for pupils linked to the curriculum. For example, pupils have been to York Minster, a car museum, to the seaside and to London. These opportunities further enhance pupils' learning.

You have successfully addressed key issues from the previous inspection. There has been effective training for staff on the quality of questioning. Teachers are using searching questions that enable pupils to think deeply about their learning. Leaders have also addressed the standards of reading across the school, including for the most able pupils. There is a reading culture whereby pupils enjoy reading books and make good progress. In further response to the previous inspection, you have also ensured that middle leaders and teachers are more involved in evaluating assessment information. You have put in place sharply focused and effective pupil progress meetings.

While you and your staff have had considerable success in raising standards in reading, there is still some work to be done in mathematics and writing. In mathematics, there is not a consistent level of challenge across all year groups and teachers do not move pupils on to more difficult work when they are ready. Furthermore, some of the most able writers in the school are not stretched to reach the higher standards.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. As the designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that pupils' safety is a collective responsibility among all staff. You have put in place very effective training for governors and staff. As a result, they have a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. You have further developed the culture of safeguarding by putting useful prompts and updates in the staff room and around the school building. The systems for record keeping are well organised and you follow up concerns tenaciously. Furthermore, you involve external agencies in a timely manner. You show absolute diligence when recruiting staff and carrying out checks on their suitability to work with children. Governors also carry out checks on safeguarding arrangements which adds further assurance to the safety of pupils.

Pupils feel safe in school and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This is particularly the case with online safety. One pupil

commented, 'When you see anything worrying or unfamiliar online, tell a trusted adult.' Pupils know about the different forms of bullying and can talk about the difference between being unkind and bullying.

Inspection findings

- To confirm that the school still remained good, we explored the impact of leaders' actions to improve outcomes for pupils. This was because pupils' progress declined in key stage 1 and 2 in 2015. The evidence found on the inspection showed that the improved outcomes achieved in 2016 have been sustained and pupils make good progress across the school. This is particularly the case in reading where the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was well above the national average in 2016. You shared current assessment information and a high proportion of pupils are reaching the expected standards in reading and writing. This matched up to the quality of the work that we looked at in pupils' books.
- You and other leaders have been instrumental in sustaining improvements in outcomes for pupils. You are delegating responsibilities to other leaders, which is building the capacity for further development. Other leaders are enjoying the challenge and having impact in their roles. The leadership team check the quality of teaching regularly and offer teachers specific feedback on how to improve. This is particularly the case with newly qualified teachers in the school. They are mentored well and have a good understanding of the progress that their pupils are making. You and the deputy headteacher analyse assessment information thoroughly and support teachers to put in place additional help for pupils. This is leading to accelerated progress for some pupils in school.
- Governors have also made an effective contribution to the sustained improvements in the school. They provide a good level of challenge and support which is evident in meeting minutes and on governor visits. For example, when external published data was released in 2016, governors asked leaders challenging questions about mathematics outcomes and the level of challenge for the most able pupils. Consequently, governors have a good understanding of the school's weaknesses and hold leaders to account. Governors also provide strategic foresight to financial planning. There has been thorough planning to ensure that budget constraints do not impact on the quality of classroom teaching. Governors have also worked in partnership with the headteacher to ensure that website is a rich source of information for parents and that it is fully compliant.
- A second key line of enquiry that we focused on was the quality of teaching in mathematics. You have identified this as a priority because pupils' progress is not as strong in mathematics as it is in English. You have started to address this issue by putting in place training for staff on problem-solving and questioning. This has had impact in some year groups. For example, in Year 6, a high proportion of pupils are achieving the expected standard and higher standard this academic year. Pupils' books in Year 6 show that work is consistently well matched to pupils' needs. However, when we looked at books and observed teaching in other year groups, we agreed that there is not a consistent level of

challenge for pupils. Some pupils are tackling mathematical work that is too easy or they are not being moved on to more challenging work when they are ready.

- We also agreed to look at the progress of the most able pupils in writing across the school. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was below the national average. Where the teaching of writing is stronger, the most able pupils make very good progress. For example, in Year 2, we looked at pupils' books and there were examples of strong improvements in handwriting, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. However, in some year groups the most able do not make as much progress. We agreed that teaching is not as consistent across all year groups and, as a result, some pupils are not challenged to reach the high standards.
- Another key line of enquiry that we looked at was pupils' attendance. This improved in 2016 and the overall attendance rate was higher than the national average. You monitor attendance effectively and respond to support pupils who have lower attendance. You have also been proactive in rewarding good attendance and your newsletters give regular reminders to parents about the importance of good attendance. These actions are having a positive effect on the attendance for most pupils. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was in the lowest 10% nationally in 2016 and, so far this academic year, it is still low. More needs to be done to support these pupils to be in school regularly.
- While the quality of teaching and progress of children in the early years was not a key line of enquiry, we still spent some time in nursery and reception. The early years provision is one of the strengths of the school. Children get off to a good start at Eastlands. The nursery staff know the children very well and provide activities that are both interesting and challenging. Children continue to make good progress as they move through Reception. Staff have high expectations, which is evident through the accurate observations and assessments of children's work. Children's next steps are clearly mapped out by staff and parents are deeply involved in their child's learning. During the inspection parents were working with their children on a 'Mini-beast hunt'. The parent feedback book gives regular opportunities for parents to make comments about their child's development. As a result of the quality of the early years provision, children are happy, confident and independent learners.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work in mathematics is sufficiently challenging for all pupils
- the most able writers are challenged to reach the high standards
- there is an improvement in the attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Meckin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with the chair of governors and two other governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to seven classrooms with you and looked at pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered 43 responses and 42 free-text responses to Parent View.

I scrutinised various documents including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan, information about teachers' performance management and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. We discussed the national test results and assessments undertaken by pupils in 2016. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.