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23 June 2017

Mr Clifford Hadley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hadley

Short inspection of Henry Bradley Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are steadfast in your approach and committed, along with your team of staff, to improving the quality of education for pupils. You know the school well and have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Careful reflection on pupils' achievements in 2016 has enabled you to identify clear priorities for moving the school forward.

Pupils' behaviour and conduct are good. Pupils are happy and enjoy being at school, and those I spoke with were keen to tell me about their learning. Adults are vigilant and provide pupils with a high level of care. Parents and carers expressed high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's effectiveness.

Governors speak passionately about the ethos of the school. They play a key role in supporting the work you do. Members of the governing body have a broad range of experience and skills, which they use well to evaluate the effectiveness of the school. They make good use of the detailed information you provide and of what they gain from their visits to the school. The governing body makes sure that additional funding is used effectively and has a positive impact on pupils' well-being and progress, especially those of disadvantaged pupils.

Areas for improvement, identified at the last inspection, have been successfully tackled. Teachers provide pupils with purposeful activities that are well matched to their needs. The most able pupils, in 2015 and 2016, achieved standards above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Children in the Reception Year have good listening skills. They stay focused on their activities and respond positively to adults' questions. You have also worked hard to increase pupils' attendance, which is now in line with the national average.

You realised that some of the high academic standards, reached in previous years, dipped in 2016. You carried out a thorough investigation to find out why this occurred and took immediate action to rectify the decline. Your actions have been well directed. For example, teachers have adopted highly effective teaching practices used in other schools, teachers' assessments of pupils have been compared against those of other schools, staff have received targeted training and new teaching programmes have been introduced. Pupils' progress has accelerated this year and pupils in all year groups are making good progress.

You agree that there is still work to be done to improve the school's effectiveness. You recognise that, although progress in the early years is good, it is not rapid enough to increase the proportion of children achieving age-related expectations. In addition, you realise that work done to improve the teaching of phonics has not led to as many pupils passing the phonics screening checks as you had hoped for. Furthermore, you understand that work done to improve pupils' attendance is not yet having a sufficiently positive impact on the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils told me that they feel safe at the school. They know that there is always an adult they can talk with. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's own recent parental survey, and those parents I spoke with, agree that their children are safe and well cared for.

You provide regular weekly staff updates and detailed training for staff and volunteers to ensure that they are fully aware of what action to take, should they need to. Staff confidently explained to me what they do if they have a concern. Discussions between staff take place regularly to ensure that pupils are effectively supported. You, as the designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding, liaise well with external agencies when additional support is needed to help vulnerable pupils. You showed me examples where you had dealt with concerns promptly and effectively. Your safeguarding records are well maintained.

Inspection findings

- A team of enthusiastic and skilled adults support children in the early years. The learning environment is stimulating and offers a wide range of activities for the children to engage in. Routines are clear and the children cooperate in their learning and play well together.

Staff use targeted questions to encourage children to communicate and to check their understanding. For example, during a 'fruit shop' role play, the teachers' questioning provided children with opportunities to extend their number skills and answer in sentences. Literacy and numeracy activities, however, are not routinely integrated into children's learning to develop these skills further.

- Children enter the early years with skills below those typical for their age. Over the last few years, this has become more evident. Children's attainment at the end of the Reception Year is below the national average, but their progress is good. Many children make rapid progress. Almost all disadvantaged children in the current Reception Year are making good progress towards the early learning goals. Half of them are making rapid progress.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress in their development of phonics skills. In 2016, however, pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check in Year 1 fell below the national average. Leaders identified this dip and modified the school's approach to teaching phonics. The low-attaining readers I heard reading used their phonics skills well and explained what their stories were about. They told me that adults in the school provide a lot of support to help them improve their reading. They did not, however, read with fluency or confidence.
- Recent assessment information suggests that the number of pupils passing the phonics screening checks will increase this year. Boys, in particular, who were below the national standard last year, are expected to do better. Even so, pupils' attainment in the national screening checks this year is not expected to reach the national expectations set in 2016. Leaders have acknowledged that the changes made to the quality of phonics teaching need further work.
- Historically, pupils have made good progress in mathematics. This dipped in 2016, especially the number of girls reaching the expected standard. Leaders have taken decisive action to rectify this and have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers now take a much more practical approach to teaching pupils new concepts, and pupils build on their skills using a range of resources and strategies. Pupils, including girls, are more confident in choosing and using appropriate equipment to help them with their number work and in problem solving. Pupils who spoke with me during the inspection told me that they enjoy mathematics.
- The school's assessment systems indicate that pupils in Year 2 are making good progress in mathematics and that they are expected to attain standards similar to national expectations. Pupils' work books also show that they are making good progress. The school's records also indicate that Year 1 pupils are making rapid progress and are reaching standards similar to national expectations. Girls in both Year 1 and Year 2 are making rapid progress and are expected to attain above the national averages set in 2016.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from targeted help and extra teaching, which is carefully planned to fill any gaps in their knowledge, skills or understanding. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their different starting points, and those in Year 1 are making rapid progress. Leaders recognise, however, that disadvantaged pupils have not yet caught up with other pupils

nationally.

- Senior leaders have worked diligently to ensure that parents understand the importance of regular attendance for their children. They have effective systems in place to monitor and improve pupils' attendance. Attendance has risen to be broadly the same as the national average. Persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils has reduced, but a notable improvement in their overall attendance has yet to be seen.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers routinely provide children in the early years with opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills so that greater proportions of children can achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year
- staff focus on improving pupils' confidence and fluency in phonics so that more pupils reach a higher standard in the phonics screening checks
- teachers maintain a strong emphasis on supporting disadvantaged pupils so that the remaining differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are eliminated
- staff work extensively with the parents of disadvantaged pupils who are absent to improve their attendance, so that it matches that of other pupils in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, three members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. You and I made a series of visits to lessons. I spoke with a group of pupils, listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read and examined samples of pupils' work. In addition, I considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, records relating to pupils' attendance and information on pupils' attainment and progress. I looked at how effectively pupil premium funding is being used and examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. Safeguarding practices were also reviewed. I considered the views of 25 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 12 free-text responses and responses to the school's own parental surveys. I also spoke with parents at the start of the day.