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Mrs Emma Rowe
Head of School
Cutnall Green CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Rowe

Short inspection of Cutnall Green CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders' modelling of key values ensures that Cutnall Green Church of England Primary School is a warm, happy and welcoming place. Pupils thrive due to the respectful and caring relationships that are established.

Pupils value the close relationships that the strong community offers and benefit from the wide range of enrichment activities that are available. Staff and governors ensure that the 'Love, learn, live' values are used to widen and diversify the pupils' experiences. Activities such as 'Rivers Fest' bring many young pupils together from a number of schools to enjoy singing together as a community. A typical parental comment was 'All children have benefited from the wide and varied curriculum on offer.'

Parents are unanimous in their praise of the school, saying 'This is a beautiful community school; the needs of the children come first.' Parents identified the way in which leaders and staff make the extra effort to ensure that pupils feel safe and happy. Leaders and staff take time to develop relationships, which parents identify as a major reason for why their children are enthused and 'run in to school' in the morning.

All parents spoken to, and those that responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, are very satisfied with the standard of education at the school. Current school assessment information would support the parents' and leaders' views that the majority of pupils are achieving well. For example, 100% of pupils achieved the phonics standard in 2017.

Over the last 12 months, the school has experienced changes in leadership, governance and teachers. Leaders have also ensured that the change to a primary school on 1 September 2017 was managed well. As the new head of school, you have already developed an accurate and detailed understanding of the training needs of the staff. You have also identified development needs for middle leaders and clarified how to further improve the school. You and the previous leaders have ensured that relevant continual professional development has enhanced staff knowledge, for example in the correct use of spelling and grammar. As part of a trust with seven other schools, leaders have utilised the trust's expertise to ensure that staff are well supported and challenged, in order to maintain the quality of teaching despite personnel changes. Staff report that this support has been useful and effective in their development.

Leaders' work to enhance pupils' personal development and behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils are polite, friendly and considerate to each other and adults. Staff encouragement and support mean that pupils want to learn, speak confidently and settle quickly to their work. Nearly all the work in pupils' books is well presented and demonstrates that the vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. However, there were times when some pupils were not focused on their work due to tasks not challenging them.

From their different starting points, the majority of pupils in all year groups are making good progress and working at the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing number of pupils are working at, or moving towards working at greater depth in key stage 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have successfully created an environment where pupils feel safe and secure. All parents spoken to and those that responded to Ofsted surveys agreed that their children are safe and well nurtured. Parents had confidence that leaders and staff would identify any concerns and there were a number of examples shared where staff had identified medical needs that had been previously missed by other professionals.

Safeguarding practice is effective and leaders keep notes and records of the actions that have been taken when they have identified concerns. Leaders repeatedly and conscientiously follow up concerns until appropriate agencies have responded. Annual safeguarding training is undertaken and staff are able to identify the appropriate responses to different situations.

Governors all undertake external safeguarding training and receive an annual formal safeguarding report from the head of school. Governors have quite rightly identified that further safeguarding training as a group of governors would strengthen their collective knowledge of the ways in which the school keep the children safe.

A very comprehensive and detailed policy on the use of keeping children safe with regards to computers and mobile technology is implemented well and therefore pupils have a clear awareness of how to stay safe while online.

Inspection findings

- You, along with the previous head of school, have been successful in creating a positive culture. Staff morale is high and all staff who completed the staff questionnaire were proud to be a member of the school. This culture has helped ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes have remained good since the last inspection. Governors, leaders and the trust have supported and challenged the school well.
- During the inspection, we explored how many children and in particular boys were meeting national standards by the end of the Reception year. High-quality assessments provide the early years leader with a very clear understanding of the children's needs. As a result, the children, including boys, receive teaching that supports their development. By the time they leave the Reception class, the large majority of children achieve a good level of development. During our visits to the early years' classes and key stage 1, it was seen that adults did not move some learners onto more difficult tasks and as a result, some children progressed at faster rates than their peers.
- Leaders have developed the early years' outdoor area into a welcoming environment. However, the activities that are provided in this area are not always planned with a clear focus on learning and this slows progress. Leaders have quite rightly identified that the further development of children's learning in the outdoor area is a focus for this year.
- As a result of historical attendance information, we reviewed the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders carefully monitor the attendance of all pupils to ensure that persistent absence is challenged. Robust procedures are in place for checking absence of pupils promptly and effectively, which results in pupils being kept safe and also increases their rates of attendance. These procedures have led to attendance figures above national in 2017 for most pupils including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance has increased slightly and leaders are clearly aware of the small number of families who needed further support.
- Current school assessment information demonstrates that while progress in writing is good, it is not as strong as progress in reading and mathematics. As a result of this school evaluation, we walked around classrooms and looked at current and past books to examine the impact of writing initiatives that were implemented last year. In a number of classrooms it was clear that writing is taught well and good progress was evident. However, this good progress was not as obvious in all classes. Some activities were not challenging for pupils as adults did not identify that some pupils and particularly the most able pupils needed to undertake more difficult tasks. You were accurate in identifying this and we both agreed that increased opportunities to write at length across a wide range of subjects would have the potential to accelerate progress further.
- You and previous leaders have used the expertise within the trust effectively to support and develop your leaders and staff. You have demonstrated that you have the skills to further develop the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have extensive information available to support their self-evaluation, but sometimes the quality of work in books did not always fully agree with this conclusion. Leaders use assessment information to track pupils thoroughly. As a consequence, a slowing in progress in one year group last year

was identified and addressed, meaning pupils continued to move towards national expectations.

- You have quickly identified the school's current position and have started to work to support middle leaders in the development of their subject areas. You have ensured that improvement plans for this year have clear measurable success criteria that will help less experienced leaders to check whether their actions have been successful or not. Some middle leaders need further support to assist them to analyse the wide range of monitoring information available to them, in order to identify what and where their next actions will be.
- On our learning walk you were precise and accurate in your evaluation and knew clearly how you would improve areas of practice. Your improvement plans for teaching and learning are detailed and have clear criteria that governors can use to review whether the school is on track to achieve your goals. The recently appointed chair of governors also brings an invaluable range of experience and knowledge and is clear in her vision of how to move the school forward. Detailed governor visit forms reviewing school improvement priorities demonstrate the ambition, impact and involvement of governors in the school.
- During the inspection we also discussed your action plan for updating the school website, as you had quite rightly ascertained that certain elements were missing. Numerous updates were able to be undertaken during the day of the inspection. You have also identified how you would like to add further curriculum information for parents on to the website and clarify how parents could offer further support for their children's learning at home. You had also noted the need to update a web link to the correct Department for Education school performance table website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- activities and provision in the outdoor learning area in early years are planned with a greater focus on learning in order to accelerate progress for all children
- middle leaders' skills and knowledge are further developed to ensure that they are all clear about measuring the impact of their actions and can identify the next steps for improvement
- the most able pupils are challenged more effectively through adults promptly identifying when pupils need to work on more difficult tasks
- there are more opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects in order to accelerate progress further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Worcester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Worcestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Cadwallader
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the previous head of school and the leaders of English, mathematics and the early years. We visited lessons and jointly scrutinised pupils' work. I also met with the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust. I also took account of the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire. I talked to a number of parents as they brought their children to school. I considered the 47 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and looked at free-text comments from parents. I spoke with pupils in lessons, at playtime and a small group during lunchtime. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I looked at a number of documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; your school self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; attendance records; governor visits, examples of school records about the care and protection of pupils, and other documents relating to safeguarding.