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16 October 2017

Mrs Sarah Roberts
High Ercall Primary School
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Dear Mrs Roberts

Short inspection of High Ercall Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have a strong sense of purpose and have ensured that pupils continue to make good progress across the range of subjects. You set high standards and are self-critical, so you recognise that there are aspects still to work on to secure further improvement.

Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2013, you have improved the quality of teaching. The effective training you have provided for all teachers has raised their expectations and developed their skills. Accurate assessments of pupils' progress have helped make your checks on teaching and learning more rigorous. The leadership team uses detailed information about pupils' progress to provide teachers with support and feedback about the quality of their teaching. In this smaller than average sized primary school, I understand that test results can vary considerably because of the small numbers taking the tests. However, you recognise that pupils' progress is not as strong in some aspects of pupils' writing, particularly the consistent application of correct grammar.

You have successfully addressed the priorities identified in the previous inspection report, and in particular ensuring that pupils are set work that is matched closely to their abilities and that they are given targets for improvement that they and their parents can understand.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable in classes and around the school. Pupils are very

polite, well mannered and respectful. They are eager to show visitors their work and take great pride in their school. The pupils' joyful singing and celebration in a school assembly on 'understanding the purpose of rules' showed how much they care about their community. Pupils know about and are keen to tell visitors about the five 'R' key values of their school, which focus on pupils becoming resilient, being respectful, taking responsibility, reflecting and being resourceful learners.

Governors are effective in their role. The chair of governors and finance governor met with me during the inspection. They showed their strong sense of commitment to, and support for the school. They are knowledgeable and fully up to date with national changes in education. They are clear about school priorities and progress made towards meeting them.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. The single central record is maintained to a high standard. Governors ask probing questions to ensure that safeguarding is effective. Training is kept up to date and ensures that staff have a good awareness of any local issues and potential problems within the community. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding within the school.

Pupils understand how to keep safe online and say that they feel safe in school. Leaders have made good links with parents and carers as well as external agencies to help them to support vulnerable pupils. Parents and pupils say that behaviour is outstanding and that instances of bullying are very rare. This is because of the school's strong pastoral support systems. Leaders are aware of the needs and concerns of individual pupils, and parents acknowledge and appreciate this.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, assessments for the small number of Year 6 pupils indicated that progress in writing was below that in reading and mathematics and followed a similar trend in 2016. However, the rapid action taken by school leaders indicates that the progress made by the vast majority of pupils has reversed this decline. The school's good attention to teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation is paying dividends. Work in pupils' books and our classroom observations during the inspection show that pupils are now making good progress in writing. Attainment is rising and, in particular, many pupils are becoming very enthusiastic about their writing.
- Your checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress are accurate and reliable. Your school improvement partner has helped you and the school's governors to pinpoint the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Through their reviews of the school's work, governors hold leaders to account for how well the school is meeting pupils' needs.
- On the basis of accurate evaluation, leaders have taken steps to improve teaching, learning and assessment across the school. Teachers now use detailed assessment information on pupils' progress as a starting point for their planning.

Skilled teaching ensures that classroom activities are now matched well to pupils' different needs and abilities, including those of the most able pupils.

- The improvements in teaching include opportunities for pupils to attempt more challenging work in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils say that they understand that even if they find activities hard at the beginning of the lesson, they will know more about what they are learning by the end. This is partly because pupils are becoming more resilient in their learning. Observations show that pupils work with positive attitudes, that they learn from making mistakes and that they help each other learn when needed.
- The school's assessment information shows that the small number of most-able disadvantaged pupils are now attaining in line with other most-able pupils. Differences in rates of progress between groups of pupils are diminishing.
- Early years provision has improved rapidly over time. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is higher than the national average. Phonics, early reading, writing and mathematics are taught very well in early years and key stage 1 so that the vast majority of pupils reach the expected standard in these subjects by the end of Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities throughout the school is very small. In your role as special educational needs coordinator, you ensure that identification of pupils who have additional needs is rapid and that they receive the best support available from outside agencies and the school's team of teaching assistants.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all groups of pupils continue to develop and further strengthen their writing skills, particularly the consistent use of correct grammar.

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

Yours sincerely

Steven Cartlidge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with groups of pupils, and two members of the governing body. I scrutinised school documents, including safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. I visited all

classrooms with you to speak with pupils, look at their books, observe their learning and to hear several pupils read. I examined safeguarding and child protection information. I took account of the 47 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and I also took account of the views of the 18 parents who texted or wrote to me. I also met with the school improvement partner.