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Mr Simon Beardall
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Dear Mr Beardall

Short inspection of Deer Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2018, 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have successfully shared your vision with staff and governors. You are highly aspirational for everyone associated with Deer Park Primary School. You are determined that pupils will receive a good-quality education, including opportunities to learn beyond the classroom walls so that they are well prepared for their futures in modern Britain.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of the teaching of reading. They were also asked to ensure that activities in lessons support the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities to make good progress. Leaders have successfully addressed these issues.

Supported by an adviser from the local authority, you provided staff with useful training in the teaching of early reading. You improved the arrangements for the teaching of phonics in school so that pupils are taught at the right level given their ability. You have provided information sessions for parents and carers to help them to support their children with early reading. Parents have access to support online so they can hear the phonic sounds and thus be accurate when they support their children at home. By the end of 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average. This was a significant improvement on previous years. You and your leadership team noticed that more confident readers could improve their inference

skills. You have already acted on this by providing training for staff so they are better placed to improve pupils' skills.

Published information for 2017 shows that a greater proportion of pupils achieved the expected standard, and the higher standard, in each of reading, writing and mathematics by the end of both key stages 1 and 2 than was seen nationally.

You are outward looking in your approach to school improvement. You, your leaders and governors visit other schools to seek out the best practice and bring it back to Deer Park. You have used this approach to further improve the quality of teaching. For example, ensuring that teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, including those who are most able, to ensure that they are challenged in their learning. Pupils I spoke with in class told me that the work they receive makes them think and that their teacher checks what they already know and can do and provides them with work that is just right for them. During our tour of lessons, we saw teachers and teaching assistants providing additional support for pupils who needed further explanations and moving pupils on to more difficult work when they were ready. The leader with responsibility for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities holds regular meetings with parents and teachers to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met.

Governors are ambitious for the school and, like you, they are determined that pupils will receive a good-quality education and achieve well. They use their extensive skills and experience to hold leaders to account. They come into school to see it in action for themselves, often speaking with staff and pupils. They, like you, have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school. This helps you to plan for further improvements.

Parents who responded to the online survey, and those who spoke to me at the start of the school day, were positive about the school. They were keen to tell me how well their children settle into life at Deer Park. Many commented on how happy their children are at school. While the vast majority of parents are happy with the amount of homework their child receives, a few parents raised concerns about this and you are keen to look into this further. Almost every parent would recommend the school to others.

Pupils are polite and work hard. They demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. During our tour of the classes, we saw pupils of all ages engaging well with their lessons and the work the teacher had set for them. For example, pupils in one class were engrossed as they learned about the correct structure of writing a letter. The teacher had skilfully used a letter the school had received from the author David Walliams to make the learning meaningful to the pupils. Opportunities for strong collaboration and discussing learning are key features of lessons at Deer Park. Pupils told me that they enjoy this approach and the opportunity to learn from each other. Pupils behave well around the school and respond to instructions from staff quickly and without fuss.

You and your staff provide pupils with opportunities to learn to play musical

instruments and to take part in a variety of sports. Pupils told me that they are proud to represent their school at sporting events, which they do with some success.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is of the highest priority at Deer Park Primary School. You have ensured that staff have the most up to date training. You and governors check regularly that staff know how to report a concern about a child's welfare should one arise. Records, including the single central record, are well kept. All the appropriate checks are made before staff or volunteers start working with pupils. You work effectively with external agencies if any safeguarding issues arise. You ensure that safeguarding is a high priority for all staff by making it an agenda item for staff meetings, enabling you to discuss issues and updates regularly. Governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously. They have received training to undertake this aspect of their role. Governors talk to staff about safeguarding during their visits, and the chair of governors discusses it with you during your regular meetings.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They learn how to cycle safely on the roads, for example. You make sure that safety is at the forefront of their minds by finishing the last assembly of every week with your mantra, 'Keep yourselves safe', which pupils repeat back to you. You are keen to improve pupils' understanding of the advantages and potential risks of modern technology. You have recently appointed some pupils to act as digital ambassadors. They help their peers to learn about keeping safe online. You have also offered support for parents in understanding how to set the appropriate privacy settings on their home computers, for example.

Every pupil and parent who expressed a view agreed that pupils are safe at school. Pupils say that there are always adults to supervise them. Pupils told me that bullying was very rare at Deer Park. They were confident that a trusted adult would help them if they had any worries.

Inspection findings

- You and your leadership team rightly identified that boys were not achieving as well as girls by the end of the Reception class. Over the last year, you and the leader for the early years have made significant changes to the learning environment and the approach to teaching. This has paid dividends. Your school assessment information shows that the gap between boys and girls has been eradicated for children at this early stage of school life. Your information also shows, however, that the gap remains in some areas of key stage 2. You are keen to build upon the effective work that has already been achieved to eliminate any difference in achievement between boys and girls.
- You and your leaders ensure that the full breadth of the national curriculum subjects are taught at the school. However, pupils currently have a limited knowledge of world religions and British values. You are mindful that you are

preparing pupils to be citizens of the future and that their future may lie beyond the area where they currently live and be increasingly reliant on technology. You are resolute that the curriculum will equip pupils to understand, in an age appropriate way, modern technology in all its forms, including social media. You have already begun the process of reviewing and improving your curriculum in order to make it engaging and relevant for all pupils.

- A teacher is employed to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. She checks carefully the progress pupils make and links her work with the work that pupils are undertaking in class. However, your evaluation of the barriers to learning and the progress these pupils could make lacks some precision. This means that, while you are meeting many of their needs and enabling them to make progress, more could be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make the progress of which they may be capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- eliminate the gaps between the achievement of boys and girls where they still exist
- place greater emphasis on precisely addressing the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils so they can achieve everything of which they are capable
- continue the review of the curriculum to ensure that it is sufficiently broad and bespoke so that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Di Mullan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader and three other members of staff. You and I visited classes in each year group to see the learning that was taking place. We looked at a sample of pupils' books from across the school.

I met with three governors, including the chair, and I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

I spoke with pupils in class and I held a more formal meeting with a group of six pupils.

I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and took account of the 101 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I also considered the 16 responses to the staff survey and the six responses to the pupils' survey.

I examined a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, information about the progress pupils make and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.