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Mrs Claire Gray
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gray

Short inspection of Ridgeway Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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 October 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 promote a caring ethos where pupils are highly valued and known well by you and your staff. The school attracts pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also high.

Pupils are happy in school. Parents and carers speak highly of the caring, approachable staff and the quality of education their children receive. For example, one parent commented: 'All the staff go above and beyond to help all children develop their full potential. There is a clear child-centred focus with high expectations being promoted and a love of learning being fostered.'

Ridgeway Infant school is a friendly, welcoming school where staff work well together. You and your team have ensured that pupils are well cared for and enjoy their learning. They are respectful and behave well because of the good relationships with their teachers and other staff. One Year 2 pupil told me that staff, 'Look after us and they tell us to do our best. They give us really fun things to learn.'

Teachers work effectively with parents to enable them to better support their children at home. For example, teachers invite parents into the school to participate in phonics lessons, alongside their children.

You and other school leaders have worked effectively with helpful support from the local authority. Together, you have developed clear strategic plans for what is needed to shape the future of the school and bring about improvements. Your accurate self-evaluation generates the school's policies, actions and staff training. For example, you recognised that the quality of teaching and learning in phonics was not as good as it could be. You made sure that teaching and learning in phonics improved considerably. As a result, in 2017 a higher proportion of pupils in Year 1 attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

The governing body provides school leaders with effective challenge and support. Governors are knowledgeable and frequently check that the actions taken by leaders are securing improvements. They know the strengths of the school and the areas that need improvement. Governors place a particular focus on the school's support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils. They ensure that funding for these pupils is used well.

You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding during lessons. When observing in lessons and looking in pupils' books, I could see that teachers ensure pupils are promptly moved on in their learning. Pupils have frequent opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback so that they can improve their work. One pupil explained to me, 'I learn from my mistakes so that I can do better next time.'

Leaders have developed the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to show initiative and to work things out for themselves. Displays around the school and work in pupils' books show that they are now regularly required to solve problems. This was not the case at the time of the previous inspection.

Subject leaders have benefited from high-quality training and lead their areas of responsibility well. Senior leaders are skilled and staff at all levels appreciate the guidance and support they provide. Staff share good practice with colleagues across the school as well as with colleagues working in other local schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have created a good culture of safeguarding within the school. Governors and staff benefit from regular and relevant training on child protection. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. You and the learning mentor work well with families and refer concerns in a timely manner. Staff are vigilant and are prepared to take decisive and prompt action, when needed, to secure pupils' well-being. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say they feel safe. They say any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare but when they do occur staff deal with issues promptly. Pupils feel well cared for by staff in school. They are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include how to use the internet safely and what to do in the event of a fire.

Inspection findings

- Since your appointment as headteacher in January 2014, you have ensured that school leaders have a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and areas that need further improvement. Senior leaders check pupils' progress thoroughly and take action when it is needed, so that standards improve.
- Pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have historically been strong. However, in 2017 the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were below the national averages. You acted promptly to review teaching strategies, modify the curriculum and ensure that pupils have access to good-quality resources. As a result, school information shows that current pupils are making at least good progress.
- The most able pupils achieved well in 2017. The proportions of pupils exceeding the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national averages.
- You have identified that there are still further improvements to be made in the teaching of mathematics for Year 2 pupils. The leader for mathematics is addressing this by helping colleagues with lesson planning and by working alongside them in class. She regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- You have successfully raised the profile of reading throughout the school in order to raise standards in pupils' reading and writing. Pupils enjoy a good range of interesting books. High-quality texts prepare them well to write about the topics they are studying. For example, pupils in Year 2 were using information they had read about teeth to write an information leaflet.
- You make good use of the additional funding the school receives. Where necessary, skilled staff provide extra teaching to individuals and small groups of pupils. This support is targeted to help pupils' learning and also their social and emotional development. You carefully check that the extra support is having a positive impact on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The school's information shows that these pupils make similar overall progress to other pupils in the school. Sometimes they make better progress.
- You carefully track the progress of different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This ensures that underachievement is quickly identified and that any necessary extra help is put in place to bring about better progress.
- You identified that the standard of pupils' writing needed to improve. The English leader provided effective coaching and training for staff and introduced new approaches to the teaching of handwriting and spelling. It was clear from my scrutiny of pupils' books that these strategies are improving the standard of writing for all groups of pupils. Nevertheless, pupils do not have regular

opportunities to write over extended periods to develop their writing skills and to write for different purposes.

- Work in books shows that teachers' expectations for pupils' writing and presentation are not yet consistently high across different classes and different subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given regular opportunities to write at length, and for different purposes, to improve their writing skills
- teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' writing and presentation of their work across a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher and your leader for mathematics. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with two members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with the chair of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

We visited classrooms and looked at a range of pupils' work together. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of 25 parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the responses of 19 staff to Ofsted's online survey for them and the 44 responses to the pupil survey. I scrutinised evidence from a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, procedures and records for safeguarding and behaviour, information on how the pupil premium is spent, an analysis of attendance and a number of policy documents. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, on the playground and during lunchtime.