

15 February 2018

Miss Cassie Hurt
Headteacher
Eureka Primary School
Dunsmore Way
Midway
Swadlincote
Derbyshire
DE11 7LA

Dear Miss Hurt

Short inspection of Eureka Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a turbulent time. A prolonged period of temporary leadership and some turnover of staff and governors have led to a decline in standards. Since your appointment in September 2017, however, you have consistently communicated a clear vision for the school. There has been a rapid and positive transformation in the school's effectiveness. Your commitment, determination and effective leadership are ensuring that the school is once again providing a good quality of education.

You are ambitious for the school and already know it well. Staff agree that you are injecting a renewed drive and energy into the school. As a result, staff morale is high. You are building a strong community ethos. The school's vision of 'nurturing, inspiring and challenging pupils' is clearly being enacted as pupils and staff work and learn together.

You are tackling, or have successfully tackled, a number of priorities. For example, you identified that pupils did not receive effective teaching in phonics. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check fell to less than the national average in 2016 and 2017. You have ensured that the teaching of phonics is now effective. School assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils in Year 1 on track to meet the

expected standard in 2018 is close to the national average.

Our visits to several classes provided good examples of the way in which your vision is shaping and guiding teaching and learning. For example, pupils in the Enquirers class identified key features of instructions and explanations. They identified the use of the third person, impersonal style and chronological order. In the Investigators class, pupils explained how they would convert units of length using accurate mathematical vocabulary. Pupils work hard and are enthusiastic and confident learners.

You believe that all pupils, irrespective of background or other circumstances, should achieve well during their time at Eureka Primary School. The leader of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities provides highly effective support to pupils and staff. Her persistent, thoughtful and carefully considered work with outside agencies ensures that pupils and their families receive precisely the support they need. As a result, these pupils make good or better progress from their starting points. This clearly reflects the school's ethos of creating an inclusive environment where learning is an enriching experience for all pupils.

The school has successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection. You and other senior leaders have evaluated the school accurately. You know that more work is needed in some areas. Leaders, other staff and the governing body have the capacity to make improvements successfully.

Despite this, teaching varies and not all teaching helps pupils to make the progress they should. Some activities do not provide enough challenge for the most able pupils and so they do not reach the high standards they should. In the Reception Year, too few children reach the levels of development that would prepare them well for work in Year 1.

I spoke with many parents at the beginning of the school day. You have the overwhelming backing and support of parents and carers for your clear vision to improve the school further. Parents particularly appreciate the inclusive, caring and welcoming atmosphere that you are creating. Inspection evidence supports these positive views about the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is the golden thread woven through all aspects of the school's work. All required recruitment checks are made to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. You ensure that staff receive the necessary safeguarding training, including training relating to protecting pupils from extremism and radicalisation. All staff are highly vigilant and well aware of the actions they need to take if they think a child protection issue has arisen.

Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take. They know whom to talk to should they have any concerns. Pupils are adamant that any

concerns will be listened to carefully and dealt with swiftly and sensitively. The school is a harmonious community where pupils often resolve disagreements themselves. Pupils are taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet and know the immediate actions to take if they view anything that causes them concern.

Inspection findings

- You are providing the school with strong, ambitious and effective leadership. You have successfully created a culture of professional challenge where staff and other leaders feel well supported to achieve their best. You hold them robustly to account for the performance of their pupils. You are setting high expectations for staff and pupils alike. As a result, current pupils are making good progress and standards are improving throughout the school.
- Governors are an enthusiastic and effective team. The governing body maintains a sound and careful oversight of all aspects of the school's work. Governors share your vision for improvement and show the capacity and skills needed to support you in this. Governors ask challenging questions of senior leaders. For example, some keep a close eye on the school's progress in diminishing the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others. This is contributing to improved standards for this group.
- You are ensuring that further improvement to teaching is at the heart of the school's work. You check teaching regularly in a range of ways, including observing lessons and looking at pupils' work. You have an accurate picture of teaching throughout the school. You are taking swift action to remedy any weaknesses, providing appropriate support, challenge, advice or training where needed. As a result, teaching is effective. You have rightly identified that not all teaching challenges pupils of all abilities well enough. In particular, the most able pupils do not always make as much progress as they should.
- You have implemented a successful whole-school approach to teaching phonics. Staff regularly check pupils' knowledge of phonics. Intervention groups and additional support are provided for any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Pupils in Year 2 were confidently sounding and writing a variety of single sounds that are represented by two letters, and some made by three letters.
- Staff take every opportunity to encourage pupils to read. Pupils told me that they enjoy reading at school and at home. The pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who read to me were enthusiastic and confident. They used their knowledge of phonics well to help them read unfamiliar words. The most able pupils who read to me were not always challenged to read books of an appropriate level of difficulty, though, so that they could fully develop their reading skills.
- The early years teacher is new in post. She is developing her knowledge and expertise to ensure that all activities meet children's needs as well as they can. For example, she is reviewing planning to ensure that children have enough opportunities to choose activities themselves and develop independence, both indoors and outdoors. There is a sharp focus on improving literacy and numeracy skills. Good relationships at all levels ensure that children feel secure.

Relationships with parents are strong and their views are valued. These vital ingredients ensure that children enjoy their learning experiences and develop confidence. Leaders recognise that too few children, particularly disadvantaged children, reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year and are not prepared well enough for the curriculum in Year 1.

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour around school are good. Pupils respect the school environment and treat each other with respect and kindness. In lessons, pupils sustain good concentration and try hard with their work. In the playground at breaktime and lunchtime, pupils' behaviour is calm and considerate.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they improve weaker teaching so that it matches the best in the school
- teachers consistently provide challenging work for the most able pupils throughout the school
- they improve teaching in the Reception Year so that a higher proportion of children, including those who are disadvantaged, reach a good level of development by the end of the year.

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

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the leader for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, three representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. I visited all classes to see pupils and staff at work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day. I considered the views of 22 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 22 responses parents made using the free-text service. I also considered the 16 responses to the pupil survey and the 11 responses to the staff survey. I evaluated a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies.