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20 February 2018

Miss Bernadette Watters
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Dear Miss Watters

Short inspection of Lenthall Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 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. The school is well led and managed. You work very effectively with the assistant headteacher. Together, you aspire for the very best for your pupils.

Lenthall Infant and Nursery School is a friendly school, where staff work well together. You and the staff team have created a positive climate for learning. The environment is welcoming, celebrates pupils' achievements and is rich with learning opportunities. Staff work hard to create exciting, interactive classroom environments both inside and outside. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic learners and behave well.

Your strong and focused leadership has ensured that pupils make good progress throughout the school. They are happy in school, and parents and carers are supportive. Parents speak highly of the quality of learning and care their children receive. As one parent commented, 'The school has lived up to my expectations of being a supportive, family orientated school. It not only provides a fun, challenging and exciting academic education for my daughter, but does so in a modern, supportive and nurturing way.'

Leaders have worked effectively with the representative from the local authority. They have developed focused strategic plans for what is needed to shape and drive the future of the school and bring about change. For example, you recognised that recent staff changes meant that the quality of teaching and learning needed to be

closely scrutinised to ensure that standards for pupils remained high. You made sure that teaching and learning improved quickly and are good. As a result, standards for pupils in 2017 at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics remained high, and more pupils attained a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. You are aware, however, that the teaching of phonics needs to be more consistent across the school.

Children in the early years achieve well. The leader of the early years has developed good-quality provision that gives children regular opportunities to gain good reading, writing and numeracy skills. Improvements to teaching, learning and assessment have led to a consistent increase in the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.

The governing body provides school leaders with effective support and challenge. Governors are knowledgeable and regularly check that the actions taken by leaders have secured improvements. They know the strengths of the school and the areas that need improvement. Governors have a particular focus on the school's support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils. They understand their responsibility to ensure that funding for these pupils is used well. However, governors do not closely check that the impact of leaders' actions ensures that pupils make consistently good progress.

School leaders have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Your determined leadership has ensured that expectations have remained high for pupils despite the significant challenges the school has faced over recent years. Staff work well as a team and share expertise with colleagues from other local schools. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas in pairs and in groups during lessons. As a result, pupils' speaking and listening skills are being developed well.

You have ensured that staff have high expectations for pupils. Teachers plan lessons which inspire and interest all pupils. Leaders frequently check on the progress of different groups of pupils to ensure that they are performing as well as they should be. Leaders ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities. You are working with newer members of staff to maintain a consistently good challenge for the more able pupils in particular.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a good culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff and governors keep up to date with training. New members of staff are provided with effective induction training to ensure that pupils are kept safe. You 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 are happy and safe in school. They say that any poor behaviour is dealt with

well by staff and that bullying very rarely occurs. However, when issues do occur, pupils say that staff resolve them quickly. Pupils feel well cared for and say that they feel confident to talk to adults in school if they feel worried. They are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include how to use the internet safely and dangers from strangers.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, you and I looked at the progress different groups of pupils make in their learning. Small and varied cohorts in different year groups make year-on-year comparisons of pupils' attainment difficult. You carefully track groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, to ensure that their progress is at least good. You act promptly to address areas of concern. For example, you have ensured that the curriculum better meets the interests and needs of all pupils and encompasses opportunities for pupils to learn in different ways. I observed children in the Reception class learning about the properties of different materials. They used bricks, sticks, straw and plastic bottles to design and make a house for the 'three little pigs'.
- A focus for the inspection was reading and the teaching of phonics. Your close scrutiny of pupils' attainment and progress identified that pupils' reading needed to improve. Staff raised the profile of reading in the school by rejuvenating the school library. They purchased new, high-quality texts to interest and motivate pupils to read. In addition, leaders and teachers lead successful phonics workshops for parents to more effectively support their children at home with early reading skills. It was clear during the inspection that reading is highly valued by the whole community. For example, pupils who read to me talked enthusiastically about their books, and one pupil told me that reading was her 'favourite hobby'.
- As part of your focus on reading, you reviewed the teaching and learning of phonics to ensure a consistent teaching approach across the school. As a result, in 2017 the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved to above national expectations. However, the teaching and learning of phonics are not yet consistently effective enough to secure continued improvements.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding the school receives. They provide extra teaching to individuals and small groups. This additional support is having a positive impact on improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, leaders' monitoring of the impact of their actions is not as precise it could be to ensure even better outcomes for these pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of phonics continues to improve so that greater proportions of pupils attain the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check

- the impact of government funding is more precisely monitored to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.

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

Stephanie Innes-Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and the assistant headteacher. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with five members of the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

We visited classrooms together and I looked at a range of pupils' work. We discussed the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's plans for improvement. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the responses of staff to Ofsted's online survey for them. There were no responses to the pupils' 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 and on the playground during lunchtime.