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Mrs Julie Rees
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Rees

Short inspection of Ledbury Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 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. Outcomes have improved strongly in writing for pupils by the end of key stage 2. In 2016, outcomes at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics dipped. Through the introduction of the new curriculum, you have ensured that outcomes in 2017 improved and standards continue to improve for pupils currently in key stage 2. The diverse curriculum ensures that pupils have wider opportunities to read and to write at length, for different purposes and across a range of subjects.

The highly inclusive nature of the school, based on its core values, ensures that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are integrated fully into school life. Leaders ensure that these pupils attend regularly and, by the end of key stage 2, they have made more rapid progress than other pupils nationally in reading and writing. Feedback to me from parents and carers of these pupils was highly positive. They commended leaders and staff for the care, guidance and support in meeting the specific needs of their children. They appreciate the way their children are involved as far as possible in almost every aspect of school life, including class performances, trips and residential visits. The very large majority of parents overall who responded to surveys said that they would recommend the school to another parent. Those making comments especially commended leaders for the welcoming ethos and effective communication, in particular through the use of social media. All pupils responding to the survey said that either they would or might recommend the school to a friend.

At your last inspection, inspectors recommended that all teachers make good use of data about pupils' progress in planning the next steps in learning. You have ensured that this now happens through monthly tracking of pupils' outcomes. The school was also asked to sharpen leaders' judgements on the work of the school, and you have successfully achieved this as well. Middle leaders now monitor teaching and analyse pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility consistently well. Inspectors also said that the school should improve the level of challenge in lessons for all pupils so that they, and particularly the most able pupils, more frequently achieve the higher levels in their work and in tests. This is now happening in teaching currently, but to date has not yet led to the most able pupils making rapid progress in reading and mathematics from the end of key stage 1 to tests at the end of key stage 2. You, other leaders and governors know the strengths and areas for improvement well and are working hard to address these as well as the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and for children in early years, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff at all levels take considerable care to ensure that pupils are kept safe and looked after well. The school site is secure. Staff are vigilant in responding to any concerns. Leaders with responsibility are well trained to carry out their duties effectively. They know how to respond should any potential safeguarding incident arise. They refer and report any incidents promptly to the relevant authorities and ensure that their records are kept confidential and secure.

All staff receive regular training and updates. Leaders make checks to ensure that staff understand what to do should an incident occur. All pupils spoken to said that they feel very safe in school and that bullying is rare. They know what to do if anything worries them, for example when accessing social media. Almost all pupils responding to the survey agreed that they feel safe. This was confirmed by all the parents who responded to Parent View and who said unanimously that their children feel safe in school. Governors carry out regular checks to make sure that leaders fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

Inspection findings

- After the last inspection, outcomes rapidly improved in writing for pupils in key stages 1 and 2. In the most recent assessments in 2017, all groups of learners did well, regardless of their different starting points. A strong focus across the curriculum, including extensive use of information and communication technology, has enabled current pupils to make rapid progress in their writing. They are very proud of their work displayed in classrooms and throughout the school. Pupils have also achieved high outcomes by the end of key stage 2 in their English punctuation, grammar and spelling and science tests. In key stage 1, pupils have made rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.

- Teachers set high expectations for pupils' writing. Pupils write for different purposes based on their learning in a wide range of subjects. For example, they were writing a biography of Nelson Mandela in Year 6 and carrying out research into the Mayan people in Year 4. Pupils use technical vocabulary accurately in their writing to enable them to work in greater depth. They are also developing their literacy skills in mathematics through problem solving and reasoning, where they have to justify their answers.
- As a result of more rigorous analysis of outcomes for different groups of pupils across year groups, leaders at all levels know the strengths and areas in need of development. Through monitoring of teaching and regular pupil progress meetings, leaders hold teachers to account. Pupils' outcomes are tracked very regularly, every 30 days for progress and every 60 days for attainment. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, some learning English as complete beginners, go on to make very rapid progress in their fluency of English in a short space of time.
- In the most recent tests in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils and most-able pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally. Leaders are successfully improving the rate of attendance for disadvantaged pupils currently in the school so that they do not miss so much work. As result of regular home visits by staff, attendance for these pupils has rapidly improved during this academic year. Leaders have evaluated the spending of the pupil premium thoroughly and now make planning the ways in which it is spent a key responsibility at a more senior leadership level. Leaders now target additional support more specifically and track the impact closely to ensure that it is making a significant difference to disadvantaged pupils' progress. Those targeted for additional support have made rapid gains in reading, writing and mathematics in recent months.
- Improving outcomes for most-able pupils remains a challenge for the school. These pupils are working at greater depth in writing but not to the same level in reading and mathematics. Most pupils spoken to said that the tasks they are set are at a suitable level of challenge. However, a minority think that the work is sometimes too easy. Leaders ensure that additional support and challenge are extended to beyond those who need to catch up. Most-able pupils as well are supported in order to stretch and challenge them.
- In the most recent assessments, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception was below average, including in reading, writing and numeracy. Leaders have ensured that the indoor and outdoor provision, particularly in Nursery, has been significantly improved to stimulate effective learning. There are dedicated areas for literacy and numeracy linked to the current curriculum topics. In numeracy, children are encouraged to develop their understanding of shape and space through visual aids based on real objects such as street signs. This is reinforced by key vocabulary, prominently displayed. As a result of focused and structured activities, children currently in early years are making more rapid progress. During the visit to the setting, however, when children were involved in choosing freeflow activities, they did not choose the creative writing and numeracy activities set up for them.

- The school rightly prides itself on its welcoming ethos and its success in integrating pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders make every effort to ensure that pupils are included in every aspect of school life. Any additional curriculum activity, such as a trip to St Fagan's museum in Cardiff or a 'Harry Potter sleepover,' is carefully planned to ensure that there are no barriers to any pupil participating. In lessons, effective additional support ensures that pupils, including those who have emotional well-being and behaviour needs, are able to access work appropriate to their starting points and make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of the pupils who responded to the pupil survey agreed that behaviour is good most of the time in lessons. A third said that it is only good in lessons some of the time. Pupils were highly positive about the conduct of pupils around the school. Those spoken to said that behaviour is good in most classes. However, it is not consistently good in every year group in key stage 2. Pupils stressed that it is a very small number of individuals responsible for incidents of misbehaviour. Pupils' views were echoed in the comments of a small minority of parents who responded to the Parent View free text service. However, a large majority of parents responding to Parent View said that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. Almost all of the staff responding to the survey said that behaviour is good most of the time and all of them said that the school manages behaviour well. No incidents of disruptive behaviour were seen during the inspection visit either in lessons or around school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher proportion of most-able pupils and disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress in reading and mathematics at key stage 2
- outcomes improve for children in early years, by encouraging more children to choose the dedicated literacy and numeracy activities set out during free-flow time
- pupils' views of behaviour in key stage 2 are followed up and investigated.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders and other teaching staff. I also met with three members of the governing body, including the chair. I spoke to two representatives from the local authority and the school's external improvement partner by telephone. I met with a group of eight pupils from key stages 1 and 2.

I carried out two learning walks with you, jointly observing parts of 12 lessons in almost all year groups in the school, including in early years. This included scrutinising pupils' books and talking to pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school. I took account of 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 50 responses to Parent View freetext. I also spoke to a parent in school and received both an email and a letter from parents. I took account of 45 responses to the staff survey and 60 responses to the pupil survey.

I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, pupil performance information, behaviour and attendance information, several school policy documents and safeguarding and child protection records. I also checked the school's website.

The key trails for this inspection were: provision, leadership and outcomes for pupils who have SEN and and/or disabilities; outcomes in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2, especially for most-able and disadvantaged pupils; the impact of the pupil premium fund; outcomes for children in early years; and safeguarding.