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Mrs Susan Ilett-Coupe
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Dear Mrs Ilett-Coupe

Short inspection of Edwinstowe CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 September 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 only recently taken up your post as executive headteacher. You have very quickly established a team vision for the future of the school. Staff and governors are enthusiastic about the future for the school. Together, you have identified the areas for development and have rapidly begun the implementation of your plan for improvement. You have redistributed leadership to include a head of the school and newly appointed subject leaders.

In the last inspection report, leaders were asked to ensure that pupils have opportunities to practise their writing skills in other lessons and to write at length. Pupils' workbooks show that pupils in key stage 1 and 2 now have many opportunities to write in English and when learning about their topics. Teachers use different subjects such as science, history and geography as a stimulus for longer pieces of writing. Pupils were able to tell me about the different topics they have been studying, and the links with other subjects. For example, when discussing learning about the Mayan civilisation, pupils included their knowledge of the Mayan number system, the geography of South America and the rainforest environment.

Leaders were also asked to develop a whole-school approach to teaching spelling in order to raise standards in writing. Pupils are now encouraged to use their phonics skills in key stage 1 to spell unfamiliar words and this is then developed further in key stage 2. During the inspection, I observed teachers taking time in lessons to

consider how words are constructed and pupils were encouraged to use dictionaries to check unfamiliar spelling patterns.

A further area for improvement from the last inspection was to improve the quality of pupils' presentation in their workbooks. Pupils' workbooks show that teachers' approach to presentation and layout is still not consistent across classes or subjects. For example, the presentation in some pupils' English books is of a much better standard than in topic books, or the expectation of one teacher is higher than another.

An area for development in the early years was to broaden the outdoor learning opportunities to help raise children's attainment equally across all areas of learning. The early years outdoor area now links well with indoor learning. Children are encouraged to take their learning outdoors and the learning environment is used well to develop pupils' learning.

Teaching remains effective. Teachers are ambitious for their pupils and are creative in their approach to delivering the curriculum in an inspiring and exciting manner.

Sometimes, however, teachers are not using assessment information, and their knowledge of what pupils can already do, to target activities that meet the needs of the most able pupils. Subject leaders do not yet have a secure understanding of the impact that their actions are having on the progress that pupils are making. This is because changes they have made are very new or they are new to their roles.

Governors are highly supportive of the new leadership team and the changes that you are making. They have a good understanding of the school's areas for development and the steps you are taking to improve the school. Governors have a secure grasp of how well funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Governors have had recent safeguarding training. The safeguarding governor carries out regular monitoring of child protection procedures to ensure that all systems are robust and meet the requirements of keeping children safe in education.

Parents are very positive about the school and feel that it has a family atmosphere. They say that staff are always available if they have concerns and feel that these are dealt with well by staff. Since you joined the school in January, parents appreciate that there is always a member of staff on the playground in the morning to greet families and pupils.

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved. They are kind, caring and considerate of each other. Older pupils frequently support younger pupils and they play happily together. The pupils I spoke with said that teachers make their learning special. They know that if they are stuck there are resources in the classroom that they can use to help them. They said that teachers will give them clues to help but they are always challenged to work out the problem for themselves. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to be a British citizen. They understand equality and that people are from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures.

Safeguarding is effective.

When you joined the school your first priority was to ensure that all staff, governors and volunteers received training in identifying the signs of abuse, how to pass on concerns, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. All staff I spoke with had a good understanding of their obligation to safeguard pupils. There have been very few safeguarding incidents. However, you and the safeguarding team have ensured that all staff have a heightened understanding that children are at risk of harm anywhere, and it is everyone's responsibility to be vigilant.

Pupils I spoke with had a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They know the dangers that they may face on social media and when using online games.

Inspection findings

- Leaders quickly responded to the fall in standards in key stage 2 at the end of 2016. Teachers carefully reviewed the progress and attainment of pupils and ensured that teaching targeted specific areas for development. Teachers' better understanding of the expectations of the curriculum ensured that they were able to plan carefully to ensure that pupils were well prepared. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 rose in 2017 to be in line with the national average.
- Since January 2018, you and the leadership team have introduced a new system to track and monitor the progress that pupils are making. Teachers are using this information to plan for pupils' next steps in learning. However, occasionally teachers are not using this information well enough to set tasks that meet the needs of all learners. Sometimes the most able pupils are not challenged enough to enable them to make as much progress as they should.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics have focused on developing teachers' skills in these subjects. In English, teachers develop pupils' reading and writing skills using a book as a focus for pupils' learning and allowing pupils to make links across the curriculum. In mathematics, teachers are developing pupils' application of mathematical skills to include problem-solving and reasoning. However, subject leaders, particularly those new to the role, do not yet have a secure overview of the effect of their actions on the progress that pupils are making in their subject.
- Pupils' workbooks show that there are many opportunities for them to develop their learning across the curriculum. However, pupils' presentation is inconsistent across subjects and between classes.
- Children in the early years are well supported by the skilled staff. Teachers ensure that children's individual needs are carefully planned for and additional support is put in place rapidly. The vibrant environment stimulates children's learning and the exciting activities draw the children in and encourage independence exceptionally well. Pupils are encouraged to carry out mark-making and writing. For example, I observed children looking for and writing down clues to investigate who was responsible for Humpty Dumpty's fall from the wall.

- The leader for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has a clear and concise overview of the provision for pupils. Specific actions to support these pupils range from in-class support through to specific interventions. Leaders monitor the effectiveness of the support carefully. The school's own assessment information shows that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making strong and in some cases accelerated progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders develop their skills further in leading and checking improvements in their subjects
- teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' presentation of their work
- teachers use assessment information and their knowledge of what pupils can already do to set tasks that meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and six governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with the head of school, the leader for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the early years leader, the mathematics coordinator and the office administrator. I spoke with seven pupils from each year group. We toured the school together and observed learning taking place during the morning. This included writing and mathematics lessons.

During our tour of the school, I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, improvement plan, peer-review documents and documents relating to safeguarding. I considered published and internal information about pupils' attainment and progress.

I considered the views of parents by speaking with them before school. I also considered the 50 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.