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Mr Gerard Philbin
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Philbin

Short inspection of Park House Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 April 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher, you have continued to provide the school with strong, positive leadership. You have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and you have a clear vision for bringing about continual improvements. You are ambitious for the school and for what the pupils can achieve. One parent stated that you and the deputy headteacher are 'brilliant leaders, empowering pupils and encouraging independence, but with really strong pastoral care'. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers and staff say that the school is well led.

Leaders successfully promote an inclusive culture, where everybody is made to feel part of the school 'family'. This is a real strength of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance. They forge strong friendships with pupils from across the year groups. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They develop successful working relationships with their peers and adults alike. The pupils I spoke with were personable and keen to emphasise the role their teachers play in helping them with their work. They feel valued as individuals and they thrive academically, socially and emotionally. As one parent put it, 'My child enjoys coming to school, which as a parent is the best thing ever.'

Pupils know how to behave during lessons and social times and they respond promptly to staff requests. Pupils say that teachers deal with poor behaviour quickly and consistently. The school is very calm and orderly. Pupils are respectful to

visitors. Leaders welcome parents into school on a daily basis. Parents are appreciative of how approachable you are as the headteacher, as well as their children's own teachers. You have ensured that the school environment is a welcoming and engaging one. Many bright and informative displays celebrate the pupils' work. These reflect the rich and varied curriculum that the pupils experience. Leaders place a strong emphasis on art, music and sporting activities, as well as ensuring that many pupils engage with extra-curricular opportunities. Parents I spoke with, and those who responded to their Ofsted survey, readily praised the school. Almost all of them said that they would recommend it to other parents.

Pupils care about each other, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very well developed. For example, pupils I spoke with confidently discussed different religions they have studied, including Judaism and Hinduism. One pupil's comment on a display summed up the school's approach by stating, 'We will never think we are better than someone because of their religion, race or culture.' Pupils also have an understanding of fundamental British values. For example, pupils learned about democracy following a visit from their local Member of Parliament. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, including being a Bronze Ambassador for sport or a member of the school council. Pupils know that their opinions are valued and that they play a key role in making the school even better.

You have ensured that governors continue to be well informed. They are committed and carry out their role well, striking the right balance between challenge and support. Members of the governing body visit the school often to support your work and that of subject leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths. However, you recognise that they need to have a sharper focus on, and understanding of, pupils' progress when considering how well the school is performing.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked leaders to ensure that teachers have high expectations and are challenging all groups of pupils in key stage 1. Teachers from key stage 2 have shared their good practice with teachers from key stage 1. The quality of teaching in key stage 1 has improved. Leaders have revised the curriculum in key stage 1 to incorporate topics which pupils find more engaging. In lessons, pupils enjoy having opportunities to learn new things. They know what teachers expect of them in terms of their attitudes to learning and the presentation of their work. Pupils of all abilities are making more consistent progress. In 2017, the proportions of pupils in key stage 1 who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national averages and higher than in 2016. Current information shows that this positive picture is continuing.

Another recommendation from the previous inspection asked teachers to make sure that pupils know how to improve their work. While leaders have introduced a new policy on assessment and feedback, not all teachers are following this new system consistently when giving feedback to pupils. A majority of pupils who responded to the school's own survey said that they know how well they are achieving. However, pupils I spoke with said that they did not always know what they needed to do in order to improve their work and make more progress. Leaders recognise that this

area for improvement remains a priority for the school.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have made significant improvements to the quality of the provision in the Reception class. Leaders have revised the curriculum. Children have an increased range of opportunities to make progress with their learning, including in the outdoor area. Relationships between the adults and children are positive and expectations are always high. Adults frequently assess each child's learning and personalise activities so that the child makes more rapid progress. Children's books show that they are making good progress from their different starting points. In 2017, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development increased and was above the national average. Current information shows that children in the Reception class are maintaining this standard. However, boys are not achieving as well as girls, and this has been the case over a number of years.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school. You have systems in place to make sure that no one can come into school without permission. You ensure that all checks are in place before an adult starts working or volunteering at the school. Safeguarding records are well organised and fit for purpose.

Staff know that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and know what actions to take if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. They receive relevant and up-to-date training, including training relating to protecting pupils from extremism and radicalisation. Although you have had very few safeguarding referrals, you ensure that pupils' safeguarding records are accurate, up to date and securely held. You request external support for pupils when needed. Those responsible for governance also take their safeguarding duties seriously. You are attending to the matter of ensuring that all governors have completed the necessary training.

Pupils say that bullying rarely happens within school and, when it does, staff are good at dealing with it. Pupils feel safe in school and their parents agree. They know how to stay safe online. Informative displays around the school from different classes cover issues such as 'keeping safe on the internet', 'Who can we trust?' and stories from Year 3 pupils imagining how Little Red Riding Hood can chat online while living 'safely ever after'. Pupils I spoke with are confident about what they would do if someone they did not know contacted them online. They also receive guidance from the fire service and the community police, and on how to stay safe on their bikes.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, the proportions of key stage 2 pupils who achieved the expected and the higher standards in reading were above the national averages. However, the progress of these pupils has been slightly below the national average for the last two years. Pupils of average ability made less progress than other pupils, and the progress of these pupils declined in 2017.

- Leaders have introduced a range of new strategies to encourage more pupils to read, both at home and in school. Pupils are able to read with increasing confidence and expression. Teachers encourage them to ask 'wonder' questions to help them to interrogate the texts more closely. This improves their understanding. Pupils are reading more widely and say that they enjoy reading. Parents appreciate the support they receive from teachers in helping their children with their reading at home. As a result of these new approaches, pupils are making better progress with their reading.
- Leaders recognise that pupils should be making better progress in mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants have received training on a new approach to teaching mathematics. They are beginning to provide pupils with more opportunities in lessons to develop their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning in their mathematics lessons. They enjoy working independently in order to complete a task. However, it is too early to judge the impact of the new teaching strategies on pupils' progress.
- During the inspection I met with the coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The coordinator is clear about the individual needs of these pupils. They receive carefully targeted support. Leaders are now beginning to track these pupils more precisely to show how this support is helping them to make more rapid progress from their low starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- adults in the early years provide more learning opportunities that challenge boys effectively, so that an increased proportion achieve a good level of development
- teachers continue to develop the strategies recently introduced for teaching mathematics, to accelerate the progress made by all pupils
- teachers apply the school's assessment and feedback policy consistently, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve.

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

Rachel Tordoff
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, who is also the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. I held meetings with leaders responsible for literacy, numeracy and the early years. I met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

I visited five classes, three jointly with you, to observe pupils' learning. I also visited the morning assembly. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons and I spoke with a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6, as well as speaking with other pupils informally. I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks with you.

I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day. I took into account the 37 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 26 free-text comments. I also considered the 13 responses to the staff survey and I reviewed the responses of pupils to a survey provided by school leaders.

I evaluated a range of information, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's use of additional government funding and information relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour, as well as a selection of school policies.