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Ms Tracey Kneale  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Kneale

### **Short inspection of Ewyas Harold Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 July 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 developed a school which is a strong, caring and cohesive community. Pupils, staff, governors, and parents and carers are proud to belong to the school. A strong team ethos is evident throughout, with every member of staff playing their part to provide a safe environment where pupils thrive both academically and in their broader development. All members of staff who completed their inspection questionnaire said that they are proud to work at Ewyas Harold Primary School.

Shortly before the previous inspection, the school became part of a collaboration which now also includes Marlbrook Primary School, Little Dewchurch CofE Primary School and St Martin's Primary School. The collaboration brings considerable benefits to the school. It provides high-quality senior and middle leadership. It brings subject-specialist knowledge to the school and it provides additional expert support for some pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The collaboration has been, and continues to be, a key factor in the school's improvement in recent years.

Your clear leadership, ably supported by the head of school and governors, has ensured that teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Academic standards have also improved and most pupils now make strong progress in most subjects and in all key stages. You know the school well, including its many strengths and few weaknesses. You continually seek to improve areas which do not yet reach the high standards you expect. For example, you recognise that some

aspects of mathematics teaching are not as effective as the high-quality English teaching which is evident across the school. However, mathematics teaching is improving because of the strategies which you have put into place.

Parents are lavish in their praise for the school. They are extremely positive about the care and teaching that their children receive. One parent summed up the views of many when they wrote, 'The school has exceeded my expectations. There is just the right mixture of learning with a good dose of fun which keeps my child enjoying school.' Another parent expressed their praise very succinctly when they wrote, 'I simply cannot praise Ewyas Harold School highly enough.'

At the previous inspection, you were tasked with improving aspects of the school's curriculum. The requirement included ensuring that pupils had more opportunities to develop creative and investigative skills, and improving pupils' understanding of Britain's diverse ethnic and religious make-up. You have addressed these issues successfully. The school's curriculum is rich and varied. It prepares pupils very well for life in modern Britain.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all staff understand the part that they each play in keeping pupils safe in school. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. I spoke with many pupils during the inspection and all confirmed this fact. They told me that bullying is very rare in school and that any that does happen is dealt with quickly and well. Your pupils have great confidence in the school's adults to help them with any problem that they might have.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Regular e-safety weeks and assemblies ensure that pupils are aware of potential online risks and the steps that they need to take to protect themselves.

Safeguarding is well led and all arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff have been well trained and consequently they are alert to the signs that pupils might need extra support. They pass on any concerns they have, secure in the knowledge that they will be dealt with quickly and appropriately. All staff who completed their inspection questionnaire and all parents who completed Parent View said they believe that pupils are safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- The inspection's first focus area was the teaching of mathematics across the school. In recent years, pupils have made strong progress in mathematics in all key stages. However, in 2017 pupils' progress by the end of key stage 2 was weaker than it had been in 2016, although still in line with the national average. Leaders recognise that some teachers are less confident in mathematics than in other subjects, including English. This has been more of an issue since recent changes to the mathematics curriculum. Leaders have put in place a range of

training and extra support, and improvement is now evident. The school's own assessment information indicates that current pupils are making similar rates of progress in mathematics and English.

- Some aspects of mathematics teaching are very effective. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. Consequently, pupils become confident in their use of arithmetic, and are able to apply these skills in different situations. Other aspects are improving, but are not taught as effectively. Teachers do not routinely expect pupils to solve problems that make them think hard, or to reason and explain their thinking when solving problems. Instead, tasks tend to be the repetitive practice of applying learned methods. Consequently, some pupils do not develop as deep an understanding as they could.
- Outcomes in English have been strong in the early years, in key stage 1 and in key stage 2 for several years. Published information for pupils' progress by the end of Year 6 has placed the school within the top 20% of schools nationally for the last three years.
- The second area that I considered during the inspection was the identification of and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders identify a high proportion of pupils as having special educational needs. These pupils, in common with other pupils in the school, almost all make strong progress in all subjects. A wide range of effective extra support is provided for pupils with specific additional needs. For example, the collaboration employs its own speech and language therapist. This means that extra help is readily available for the small number of pupils who need it. However, leaders have incorrectly identified some pupils as having special educational needs because they receive some extra help or need to catch up, rather than because they have a specific additional need. This practice is contrary to statutory guidance from the Department for Education. During the inspection, I found no evidence of this practice having a detrimental impact on pupils.
- The next area that I considered was the school's curriculum and the extent to which it prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Leaders have designed a curriculum which aims to develop pupils academically, but also spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. It successfully develops all of these aspects and consequently prepares pupils very well for their next steps in education and life. A wide range of visits and activities, closely linked to curriculum plans, helps to engage and interest pupils. Within school, pupils celebrate festivals from different religions and spend time studying cultures which are very different to those which they are used to. There is strong emphasis on art, drama and music. Pupils are encouraged to be creative and to develop investigative skills. For example, I observed pupils in Reception and Year 1 building their own home for a 'bog baby' in the school's forest area. The pupils talked articulately and enthusiastically about the home that they were creating.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- further improve the teaching of mathematics by ensuring that pupils:
  - routinely have to think when solving problems rather than just applying learned methods
  - are regularly expected to reason and explain their thinking when solving problems
- revise the school's processes for identifying pupils who have special educational needs.

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

Alun Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school and other members of your senior leadership team. I visited several classes with senior leaders, during which we observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils about their work. I talked with many pupils in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. I met with four governors, including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. I scrutinised several documents, including your self-evaluation, your school development plan, and safeguarding and child protection records. I talked with several parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I considered the 19 responses to Parent View, including the 13 free-text comments, and the 11 responses from members of staff to the online inspection questionnaire.