

15 May 2018

Mr Adam Breakwell
Headteacher
Orleton CofE Primary School
Orleton
Ludlow
Shropshire
SY8 4HQ

Dear Mr Breakwell

Short inspection of Orleton CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You, senior leaders, staff and governors have high aspirations for the pupils at your school. You continually reflect on your practice to assist the school's journey towards becoming an outstanding school. You have created a rich and vibrant learning environment and ensure that pupils have a wide range of experiences to grow, both socially and academically. For example, you have created a garden so that pupils can learn about food. They grow fruit and vegetables and cook regularly. Pupils enjoy a varied and interesting curriculum. For example, on the morning of the inspection, Year 2 pupils were excited to see a chick hatch in their classroom. Years 4 and 5 were out on local field trips, learning about science and geography. Music and sport are high priorities. The physical education and sport premium funding is spent well to introduce pupils to a wider range of activities, such as kabaddi and fencing. Your philosophy, 'To be the best you can be', sits at the heart of the school.

Although they are newly formed as a governing body, governors have established good relationships with each other and work together very effectively. They take an active role in holding leaders to account and monitor the impact of school actions for themselves. They visit school regularly and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They analyse pupils' outcomes in great detail and explore issues thoroughly, such as the progress and attainment of boys in reading and writing in comparison to girls.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. The feedback received during the inspection was overwhelmingly positive. Parents value the friendly feel of the school, the good communication and the support from teachers. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities were particularly appreciative of the support their children receive and the progress they make.

Pupils are well behaved and conduct themselves well around school. They are polite and courteous and hold doors open for adults and each other. They play together well at breaktimes, on 'the tyres', in the playhouse and in 'the cage' playing football. Year 6 pupils take responsibility for selling healthy 'tuck', such as apples and cheese. Several pupils said that the special thing about the school was 'friendship'. Pupils know who to go to if they need help and say they feel safe at school.

The school has limited involvement with the local authority because it is deemed a good school. You currently provide support to other local schools and the school is part of a soft federation. As a result, this has allowed other leaders, such as the head of school, to further develop in their roles.

Since the last inspection, you have taken positive steps to promote pupils' independence and to develop their thinking skills. For example, pupils are working on developing resilience, being ready to learn, face challenge and work independently. In mathematics, pupils are given questions and reasoning activities at a higher level to challenge their thinking more. You acknowledge, however, that there is still work to do so that pupils take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding and arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils are safe and well looked after. You provide practical and emotional support for pupils and families and refer cases to appropriate external agencies when needed. Staff receive regular training and updates and know what actions to take if they have a concern about a pupil or a member of staff. As a result, they are clear about their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Further safeguarding information and contact telephone numbers are readily available for staff, visitors and volunteers on staff noticeboards. There is a clear system in place for recording concerns. Records are kept secure. However, you recognise that the actions you take are not recorded in a systematic way that would enable others to see quickly what you have done. Already, you have taken action to organise a review of your record-keeping.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. They learn about specific aspects of safeguarding through the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and receive an assembly about safety and behaviour each half term.

Inspection findings

- Over time, pupils have achieved consistently strong outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Frequent opportunities are taken to enable pupils to apply and develop the skills they learn in English and mathematics in other subjects. For example, when Year 2 pupils made pizzas on a school visit to a pizza restaurant, they wrote instructions and worked out fractions. When learning about light and shadows, Year 3 pupils created bar charts. Pupils present their work well and write in clear, cursive script. Teachers have the same expectations for writing in other subjects as they do in English lessons and pupils apply their writing skills well.
- In 2017, the most able pupils made less progress than in 2016 in reading and writing. Although this was a small group of nine pupils, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the higher standard was below the national average. The most able pupils at Orleton are capable and able to achieve high standards. For example, the most able pupils in Year 2 accurately use grammatical features such as adverbs, ellipses and brackets in their writing. In Year 3, pupils use adverbs such as 'reluctantly' and 'gleefully' to describe how someone is speaking. However, on occasion, when focusing on higher-level skills, pupils disregard basic features such as capital letters and simple spellings. They do not routinely check their own work for errors even though they know how to. You and your staff have targeted most-able pupils and have heightened your expectations of them. However, pupils are not always given the opportunity to explore learning for themselves, especially in mathematics.
- For the past two years, girls have achieved higher standards and made more progress in reading and writing than boys have. You have looked at this carefully with governors, in all year groups, and have concluded that there is not a school-wide issue of underperformance of boys in reading and writing. That said, you are mindful of individual cohorts and class sizes. You have considered the choice of texts in reading and subject matter in writing to inspire boys. You recognise that the boys in your school tend to like more structured writing. Work in books shows that boys are now making good progress in writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- responses to safeguarding concerns are recorded more systematically
- teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Cameron
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your senior leadership team. I met with the chair of the governing body, three other governors and the clerk to the governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered five letters and one email received during the inspection, as well as the 68 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I also considered the 27 responses to the staff survey and the 36 responses to the pupil survey. I spoke to pupils formally and informally during the day. I scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the single central record, safeguarding records, your school self-evaluation document and school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and assessment information. Together, we visited all year groups that were in school during the inspection and looked at pupils' work. I observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including in the breakfast club and at breaktime.