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Mr Martin Marriott
Head of School
Spreyton School
Spreyton
Crediton
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Dear Mr Marriott

Short inspection of Spreyton School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been considerable changes in staffing and governance since the previous inspection. You joined the school in September 2015 and the early years/key stage 1 teacher joined as a permanent member of staff in January 2017. Your approachable demeanour, sharp focus on improvement and high aspirations for the school have been welcomed by the school's community. Parents and carers are effusive in their praise for the effectiveness of school communication.

Spreyton is a small two-class school and is one of four schools within the Devon Moors federation. In December 2017, the federation joined with the United Schools Trust. The broad range of schools and expertise across the new partnership has strengthened the school's leadership capacity. In close partnership with the executive headteacher, you have taken decisive action to remedy the school's weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. You have successfully raised standards through sharing good practice, for example by holding meetings for staff across the federation of schools to check the accuracy of teacher assessments.

Since the previous inspection, the school age range has increased to include three-year-old provision. This initiative has been successful. Leaders have taken on board advice from expertise within the local authority. Consequently, children get off to a flying start in Spreyton. Close work with other schools in the federation has strengthened the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years. Aspirations are high. Teaching staff are skilled and led well. As a result, children settle well and thrive.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding work relentlessly to ensure that all is being done to minimise pupils' risk of harm. Staff vetting checks are fit for purpose and in line with requirements. Staff induction is thorough. They are confident in how to use and apply the school's safeguarding procedures.

The astute governing body makes close checks to ensure that all safeguarding procedures are compliant. In addition, leaders have commissioned an external review of safeguarding to assure themselves that safeguarding procedures are thorough. The audit confirmed that safeguarding systems are effective.

Where leaders perceive there to be concerns, they act swiftly. They are vigilant in working closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. Safeguarding record-keeping is precise and organised. Pupils feel safe. They know what to do if they have any concerns and are confident to share their worries with any member of staff. They are unanimous in their view that bullying seldom happens in Spreyton. Pupils and parents refer to the 'great family atmosphere' in the school.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of leaders to raise standards in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils reach the highest standards. This is because, over the last two years, no pupils reached a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics at either key stage 1 or 2. Teaching has tackled weaker achievement successfully. The most able pupils receive the challenge they need to achieve well. In addition, more of the pupils who were of average ability in key stage 1 have risen to the challenge to reach higher standards.
- Teachers are making better use of what pupils know, understand and can do to provide pupils with suitably challenging work. In addition, pupils no longer give up when they are faced with challenges. Work in their mathematics books shows that pupils confidently apply their mathematical thinking to solve problems. More pupils are making strong progress to reach the higher standards in mathematics across both key stages 1 and 2.
- The use of high-quality reading text has supported pupils' writing. They make good use of the rich vocabulary gained from reading to make their writing come alive. However, pupils' writing is sometimes marred by inaccurate spelling and punctuation. Staff have engaged with training across the federation to tackle this. Work in books, particularly in key stage 2, reflects improvement. More pupils are editing their work to enhance punctuation or to check their spellings. We agreed that there was a need to raise teachers' expectations further so that spelling, punctuation and grammar add to the quality of pupils' writing.
- Second, we explored the effectiveness of the quality of phonics teaching in the early years and in key stage 1 in supporting pupils' good reading and writing as they progress through the school. Although pupils have mostly met the expected standard in the phonics checks, pupils in key stage 1 in particular are not

applying their good knowledge of phonics in their writing. On one day pupils spell words correctly but on another day, the same words are misspelt.

- Pupils do, however, apply their phonic knowledge well in their reading. Pupils of all ages delight in reading. Leaders' wise investment in books has ensured that pupils read high-quality texts that they enjoy. Initiatives to encourage pupils to read deeply and often have also been successful. Consequently, reading is a strength of the school; more pupils reach the higher standards in reading than in writing or mathematics.
- Finally, we looked into the effectiveness of the governing body in holding senior leaders to account. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses gained through regular visits to school where they gain precise information about progress towards school improvement priorities. They use this information wisely to challenge leaders and to redirect resources where necessary.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils across the school apply the correct spelling, punctuation and grammar more consistently in their writing
- adults raise their expectations of pupils' writing in key stage 1 so that pupils make good progress to reach at least expected standards by the end of Year 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I worked with you and the executive headteacher. I heard readers in Reception and Year 1 and observed the teaching of phonics. I scrutinised safeguarding records including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I spoke with pupils and staff about their views of the school. I also reviewed evidence of various referrals and communications with external agencies for safeguarding pupils.

I met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and a sample of governors' visits. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took full account of the eight responses on Parent View as well as reviewing the free-texts received through the inspection.