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Miss Heather Cooke
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Dear Miss Cooke

Short inspection of Edith Cavell Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 July 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 previous inspection.

You and your leadership team lead the school with a strong sense of purpose and clear direction. You recognise the importance of this as the school expands to become an all-through primary provision from Reception to Year 6. Your leaders share your high expectations and feel well supported in carrying out their roles. Staff are proud to work at the school and are committed to providing the best environment for pupils' success. New pupils, especially those newly arrived from other countries, settle quickly because you have created a nurturing and welcoming school community.

Leaders know the school well. They take decisive action to overcome weaknesses and understand the priorities set for school improvement work. You actively seek support from other colleagues in schools and join partnerships to support your improvement work. These partnerships have enabled leaders to develop their skills and carry out their roles effectively. You use the support of the local authority to check your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and identify where further action is required. Your 'outward view' is supporting the improvement seen in many areas of the school's work such as the new approaches to the teaching of mathematics.

Governors are aware of the challenges leaders face as the school grows. The governing body ensures that staff are supported so that they do their jobs well. Governors work closely with leaders and carry out different monitoring activities to help them understand how well the school is doing. Governors have a range of skills and expertise that they

use to hold leaders accountable for the quality of education. However, leaders' plans for improvement do not provide sufficient detail to help governors measure the impact of the actions to improve the school. This means that the challenge governors provide is not as precise as it can be.

Pupils said that Edith Cavell is the best school. They are enthusiastic about the different subjects they study and the way teachers make learning fun and interesting. Pupils have a good understanding that individuals are different but emphasise the importance of treating everyone equally. One pupil told me, 'We are all equally important in this school.' Parents are also positive about the school. The large majority who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that their children made good progress. One typical view stated, 'The standard of teaching is of a high quality. There is emphasis on appropriate stretch and challenge.'

At your previous inspection, you were asked to improve the teaching of phonics. You provided training for staff to ensure that all groups of pupils are well taught. Your leaders are thorough in checking the quality of teaching and monitoring of pupils' progress. Pupils receive additional support to help them catch up. You introduced small conversation groups for pupils who arrive at school with no spoken English. This approach builds their confidence and develops their speaking skills. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to read and write. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen since the previous inspection. In 2017, this was in line with the national average.

You were also asked to refine the recording of pupils' progress and attainment so that assessments closely matched the new expectations of the national curriculum. Through your school partnerships, your leaders have worked alongside other colleagues to check that their assessments of pupils' learning are accurate. Regular opportunities are timetabled for teachers to come together to review and check judgements. Your information on pupils' learning is now accurate.

You introduced a whole-school system to monitor pupils' progress and trained staff in its use. Teachers make good use of this system to record pupils' achievements across different subjects. Your leaders interrogate the information to check whether pupils are falling behind. You hold teachers to account for improving the outcomes for these pupils, which is ensuring that pupils are making good progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated safeguarding lead, you have a secure understanding of your responsibilities. You maintain detailed safeguarding records and swiftly address any concerns regarding child protection. Staff are fully aware of pupils' specific needs and do not hesitate to contact outside agencies when pupils or their families require additional support. Staff are well trained and are alert to any concerns regarding safeguarding matters. You take regular opportunities to update their knowledge so that there is a strong culture of vigilance that keeps pupils safe.

Procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are in place. You make

sure induction information provided for those who are new to the school is comprehensive. Staff and governors involved in appointing staff have also been trained in safer recruitment. This ensures that staff joining the school are safe to work with children.

Pupils who spoke with me said they feel safe in school. This is because they are confident that members of staff would listen to their concerns. Pupils told me about the 'tell me' boxes they could use if they wanted to share a concern confidentially. Your staff also check how pupils are feeling each day through 'sunny' and 'blue' cards. This allows staff to quickly identify and address pupils' concerns, ensuring that they develop positive attitudes to learning.

Inspection findings

- For my first key line of enquiry, I wanted to check how teachers ensured that pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly in mathematics and writing. This is because there is no published information for the pupils currently in key stage 2.
- In 2017, the standards attained in mathematics in the key stage 1 assessments were below national averages. Your school improvement plan identified this as a priority. Your leaders have attended training and introduced a mastery approach where most pupils progress through the curriculum content at the same pace. Teaching emphasises deep knowledge, practice to develop mathematical fluency and extra help for pupils who need it. Pupils regularly practise and remember their addition and multiplication number bonds. This provides pupils with confidence when using their knowledge to tackle calculations.
- Pupils' mathematical fluency is improving because teachers plan opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Through your chosen approach, pupils use visual images and resources to represent their thinking in different ways. Pupils select challenges and teachers check their choices so that tasks are matched to pupils' abilities. However, evidence from pupils' books shows that problem-solving tasks are less frequent and limit pupils' opportunities to develop their reasoning skills. You have identified that there is still more to do to develop all teachers' understanding of the use of strategies to deepen pupils' mathematical thinking.
- Standards in writing have risen. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who attained expected standards at key stage 1 was in line with the national average. Your teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to write. Quality texts are used as starting points for pupils' topics. This exposes pupils to a greater range of vocabulary and provides ideas for their own writing. Evidence in workbooks shows pupils are developing their skills of authorship by having a good awareness for the purpose of their writing. Pupils use their topics to explore different types of writing. For example, in a project on the Second World War, pupils learned how to write instructions for a blackout as well as developing skills of writing a recount of their experiences as an evacuee.
- Pupils' handwriting is neat and they take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils' 'remarkable writing' books show evidence of strong progress, especially for the girls. Boys' writing is not improving at the same rate. We looked at a sample of their

workbooks and found that they lacked the stamina to develop fluency in their writing. Some teachers do not have the same expectations of how much writing boys produce compared to the girls. As a result, boys' progress in writing is weaker.

- My second line of enquiry focused on how well children made progress in the early years. This is because the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception has been below the national average for three years. We visited the early years together to check the quality of provision. Children work together well. They take turns while playing games and share ideas for making models. They select activities independently and sustain their concentration when working on a task.
- Your leaders use assessment well to support children's development. A significant number of children speak English as an additional language when they enter Reception. Leaders ensure that adults model language and encourage children to talk by asking them open-ended questions. Records of their learning show that children make significant gains from low starting points. However, the outdoor provision is less well developed. For example, opportunities for children to make choices about the activities they would like to try are limited by the range and type of equipment available. Consequently, children do not learn as well as they could from activities in this area.
- For my third line of enquiry, I wanted to find out whether leaders are successfully improving pupils' attendance. This is because in 2017 the attendance rate was below the national average. You have carried out a reorganisation of staff roles to ensure that non-attendance is analysed regularly. Your learning mentor meets with families where attendance concerns are identified, and you provide additional support to meet their needs.
- You have introduced rewards and incentives to encourage pupils' attendance. For example, 'attendance bear' is awarded for the best attending class and pupils are presented with bronze, silver and gold awards for full attendance over a term. Newsletters to parents remind them of their responsibilities and where necessary you have taken additional action. As a result of your actions, attendance is improving, and persistent non-attendance is declining.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement identify precise measures to determine the impact of actions to improve the school
- all teachers are equipped with the skills and subject knowledge to deepen pupils' use of reasoning in mathematics
- teachers plan opportunities to develop boys' stamina for writing so that boys make the best progress from their starting points
- the early years outdoors provision is improved to meet the development needs of all the children.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Bedford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, phase leaders, the leader of the early years, two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with other pupils during the day. I took note of 15 responses from Parent View and 14 free-text comments that were received. I considered the views of 33 staff who responded to the staff survey. I also took account of 42 responses from the pupil questionnaire. I observed teaching and learning jointly with you. I looked at pupils' work in their classrooms and considered the progress evident in a selection of pupils' workbooks. I scrutinised school documents, including the child protection and safeguarding records, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation document.