

26 September 2018

Mr Timothy Voss
Headteacher
Hare Street Community Primary School and Nursery
Little Grove Field
Harlow
Essex
CM19 4BU

Dear Mr Voss

Short inspection of Hare Street Community Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

You are a highly respected, dedicated and knowledgeable leader. Together with your able deputy headteacher, you have developed a skilled and committed staff team who work effectively alongside each other. They do all that they can to encourage and look after pupils in their care. All 27 staff who responded to Ofsted's survey agreed that the school is led and managed well. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported because they have opportunities to share ideas and plan together.

Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has strengthened further. You and your leaders have achieved this by monitoring and evaluating systematically what teachers do to help pupils learn well. You have made sure that very effective support and training for all teachers and teaching assistants enable them to be sharply focused on each pupil's specific learning needs. The progress pupils make across the school has increased significantly. For the last three years, by the end of key stage 2, pupils made progress that was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained high standards exceeded national figures.

By the end of key stage 1, pupils also make strong progress, consistently attaining standards above their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Equally, standards in the early years and in Year 1 phonics are also consistently above average. Tailored support ensures that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are assisted well and make strong progress from their starting points. Similarly, high-quality teaching and assessment ensure that disadvantaged pupils make substantial progress to attain higher standards than other pupils of the same age nationally.

Along with your committed staff and governors, you have established Hare Street Community Primary School and Nursery as the hub of the community. You and many of your staff team have worked together at the school for a considerable time. However, there is no complacency but instead a shared focus and energy to continually improve the school. You, the staff and governors also have a strong sense of moral purpose and you ensure that the school's inclusive ethos is put into practice. For example, all school visits are carefully planned, and venues checked to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their additional needs, can participate fully. Resources and equipment are carefully chosen, such as the fixed climbing equipment on the playground, which is designed to allow full wheelchair access.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They told me that they really enjoy school and talked proudly about their learning. Pupils appreciate the caring and nurturing approach from staff and, in return, show respect and kindness to one another. Pupils are taught that all people are equally valuable and that they should not judge others on, for example, the colour of their skin or their religion. As one pupil commented: 'We are very friendly. It doesn't matter what you look like, everyone is welcome here. We all have different talents.' As a result, pupils develop good attitudes that prepare them well for life in modern Britain.

Parents recognise you as an effective leader and are overwhelmingly positive about you and your staff team. In Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, parents state they have 'great faith' in your staff, who they describe as 'amazing', 'highly dedicated', 'approachable' and 'well-respected'. One parental comment, typical of the comments made, stated: 'This school goes above and beyond when it comes to the children, whether it be through their learning, their mental health or their behaviour they never fail to impress me on how far they go to help make sure school life is the most positive experience for all.'

The school is well supported by a skilled and knowledgeable governing body. Governors are passionate about the school and work closely with you and your staff to make sure that pupils have access to a high-quality education in an atmosphere which is positive, warm and friendly. Governors provide effective challenge in most areas. They have identified that they are not holding some subject leaders to account well enough because they do not have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Recruitment checks on the suitability of staff working in the school are meticulously maintained by your finance officer. Staff are well trained and dedicated to making sure that pupils are safe. They know how to recognise potential concerns and how to report them. Leaders have developed strong relationships with parents and outside agencies so that any additional support that pupils may need is provided in a timely manner.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that the adults will help them if they have any worries or problems. Teachers help pupils to understand how to stay safe in their community, for example when crossing roads. E-safety awareness has a high priority in school. Pupils know not to speak to strangers online and know the importance of reporting anything that they see online which makes them feel uncomfortable. All parents who responded to Parent View reported that their children are safe in school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed key lines of enquiry for me to explore. First, I considered what leaders are doing to ensure that boys are achieving well in reading and writing, compared to girls. This was an area for improvement from the previous inspection. Published results in 2016 and 2017 for early years and key stage 1 show that boys did not achieve as well as girls in these two areas. The differences in achievement between boys and girls were not as marked in key stage 2.
- Boys and girls now make equally strong progress. You are quick to spot and act to minimise any differences in their achievement. For example, led by your deputy headteacher, the learning environment in early years has been reorganised and now has increased opportunities for writing both indoors and outside. Activities are planned that encourage boys to write, whether using giant chalks on the playground to practise writing letters or adding their name to a list to take their turn on the ride-on toys. In reading and writing across the school, you and your staff have chosen the texts pupils study to be equally appealing to boys and girls.
- The boys I met with spoke about enjoying books and understanding the importance of learning to read. They told me, 'We need to read more. You learn so much from books. You learn new words and what they mean.' As a result of your efforts, the school's own assessment information, the unvalidated results for 2018 and work in pupils' books demonstrate that there are currently no noticeable differences between the progress of boys and girls in reading and writing across the school.
- Another line of enquiry focused on how well leaders check the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects to ensure that pupils have access to a broad, relevant curriculum and achieve well. I met with your subject leaders for humanities and the arts to gather evidence about teaching and learning in these subjects. This is because effective schools ensure that pupils make consistently

good progress in a wide range of subjects.

- Your subject leaders are enthusiastic, confident and knowledgeable. They check the quality of teaching in their subjects rigorously and in many different ways. This includes observing lessons, scrutinising teachers' plans, talking to pupils and looking at pupils' workbooks.
- Subject leaders support colleagues well. They identify any areas that teachers feel less confident to teach and provide high-quality training and follow-up support. This ensures that teachers can plan and deliver work which allows pupils to make strong progress across the whole curriculum. For example, to improve pupils' drawing, the arts leader recently led training on the skills pupils need to acquire and organised 'the big draw' project across the school. Pupils talked with great enthusiasm about the project and their improved drawing skills, explaining to me that, 'Where the light hits the object – that's the bit you shade in.'
- The systems for assessing the progress of pupils in all subjects, such as history, geography and music, are firmly in place. Consequently, your subject leaders can identify clearly where pupils' progress is best and where it could be better. Although the work of subject leaders is extensive and effectively identifies actions for improvement, governors do not yet have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in all subjects or how well pupils are achieving across the curriculum. As a result, governors are not able to challenge subject leaders as scrupulously as they should or hold them to account for pupils' outcomes and areas that need to improve.
- Finally, I looked at how well pupils are supported and encouraged to attend school. The attendance of pupils at the school is above national figures. However, while the vast majority of pupils attend school very regularly, a small number of pupils have missed school too often in the past. I looked at rates of attendance and, specifically, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Previously, these groups have had higher absence than other pupils in the school, including persistent absence.
- You have ensured that attendance is given a high priority in the school and your well-judged actions have helped these pupils attend more regularly. Rigorous procedures are in place to check the reasons for any pupil's absence. Your effective attendance officer is quick to address any attendance issues; for example, through contacting parents at the start of the day when pupils do not attend school.
- These focused actions are having a positive influence. The attendance figures for the school, and particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, remain above national figures and are improving still.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors strengthen their understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes across subjects other than English and mathematics, so that they can hold subject leaders more stringently to account and secure further school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with you and your deputy headteacher, I visited all classes across the school. I observed teaching and learning in lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke informally with pupils. I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss progress since the previous inspection. We also discussed outcomes for children in the early years and other pupils, and the impact of decisions leaders have made on their learning. I also met with your attendance and finance officers and some of your subject leaders.

I spoke to the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and another governor. I met with an adviser from the local authority to discuss their work with the school. I also met with a group of pupils more formally to talk about their school experience. I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including: the school's improvement plans; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; your records of monitoring and evaluation; minutes of governing body meetings; reports of governors' visits; and the school's assessment information for all year groups. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance. A discussion was held with you and your deputy headteacher, as the school's designated safeguarding leads.

I took into account the 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 43 free-text responses from parents. I also analysed the 35 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, and the 27 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.