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Mr Umesh Patel
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Patel

Short inspection of Herrick Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 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 last inspection.

You are ambitious for the school and have high expectations for pupils to reach their full potential. You are ably supported by conscientious assistant headteachers and middle leaders.

Pupils throughout the school make at least good progress. In the early years, children make good progress, and often their progress is substantial. This enables many children to catch up. The proportion reaching a good level of development is in line with the national average. Over time, an above-average proportion of pupils in Year 1 have achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. For the last two years, pupils have left Year 6 having made above-average progress in writing. Pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has also improved and is now above average.

You and your staff have created a warm and welcoming school in which academic performance and personal development are equally important. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils are well mannered, respectful and courteous towards each other and adults. They are well behaved, both in lessons and at social times. Pupils told me that they enjoy learning. They explained that this was because teachers set fun activities that are 'hands-on'. You provide pupils with a broad curriculum that contributes well to their development as British citizens.

Pupils enjoy the rich and varied experiences that the school offers. They take pride in their school and in their community.

You measure the school's effectiveness by comparing pupils' progress and attainment with national benchmarks. You therefore have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. The school's improvement plan clearly sets out what needs to improve. You set measurable targets to check on the impact of the actions that you take.

You have created a successful programme of staff development. You encourage teachers to take responsibility for improving their own teaching practice. Some staff who joined the school in September 2018 are developing their teaching skills in order to reach the high expectations that you set.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use to provide pupils with interesting and engaging activities that support learning. Teachers use questioning particularly well to check on and deepen pupils' understanding. This contributes to a higher proportion of pupils reaching a greater depth in their learning than seen nationally. Teachers often provide pupils with helpful resources to support their learning. Typically, work is matched to the differing needs of groups of pupils. Many teachers also quickly rectify pupils' misconceptions so that their understanding is accurate.

Last year, you changed the school's assessment system. Leaders and teachers are now using a different way of checking and recording pupils' progress. You are becoming more confident in the new system's reliability and accuracy as it becomes embedded. The system provides you with more detailed information about what pupils can do and where there are gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are now better informed to help pupils fill these gaps.

Following the school's last inspection, you were asked to improve pupils' problem-solving in mathematics and other subjects. You and other leaders have researched effective practice. Using this information, you have amended the school's approach to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers now provide more opportunities for pupils to solve problems. Pupils were observed solving problems in lessons. Examples were also seen in pupils' work books. Pupils told me how they solve problems in history and geography.

Inspectors also asked you to provide pupils with harder work, especially the most able pupils. Teachers now provide pupils with tasks that are more challenging. However, pupils say that there are times when they could move on to the harder work more quickly. You have also developed pupils' reasoning skills since the last inspection. Pupils routinely explain their answers to show a deeper level of understanding. This has been most effective in helping pupils to reach a greater depth in their learning.

You are well supported by the governing body. Governors are committed to improving the school further. They are aware of the positive impact that leaders' actions are having on school improvement. Governors are not afraid to hold leaders and teachers to account to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality education.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a very strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You make sure that staff and volunteers are checked for their suitability to work with children. You and the safeguarding team train staff effectively in all safeguarding matters. This includes issues relating to extremism and radicalisation. Staff shared with me the weekly safeguarding 'scenario'. This helps staff to increase their confidence in the actions they take when they have a concern. The safeguarding team promptly accesses any extra support that pupils may need. Members of the team diligently follow up concerns to help keep pupils safe.

Pupils explained to me how they learn to keep themselves safe. They told me that they feel safe in school. Pupils understand different forms of bullying. They report that there is very little of this type of behaviour in their school. Parents who responded to the school's own survey said that their children feel safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders ensure that pupils make good progress in reading. They have a great desire to improve this further. While leaders' actions have not improved pupils' progress, they have identified that pupils' comprehension skills are not developed well enough to support stronger progress. Teachers are now skilfully guiding pupils through challenging reading skills and techniques. These new approaches are relatively recent and the impact on pupils' progress, over time, has not yet been measured.
- Leaders had improved the standards that pupils achieved in key stage 1 following the last inspection. This was especially true in writing and mathematics, where progress had become stronger. Leaders have not, however, sustained the improvements and higher standards over time.
- Although still broadly average, there has been a steady decline in the proportion of pupils making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have reflected on this and have taken remedial action. They have adopted the successful key stage 2 teaching approaches in key stage 1. However, these developments, although showing improvements, are at an early stage and their impact has not been evaluated.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils have made good progress by the time they leave Year 6. In writing, disadvantaged pupils have reached standards above other pupils nationally. They have also, at times, reached similar standards to other pupils nationally in reading and in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils' progress at key stage 1, however, has not been as strong. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school has also become more varied across

subjects and year groups. Leaders' actions to improve this are effective. The schools' assessment information suggests that disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving again.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils who make strong progress in reading during both key stage 1 and key stage 2 increases
- pupils' progress improves during key stage 1 by building on the strong progress that children make in the early years, and that pupils make in the Year 1 national phonics screening check.

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

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I discussed leaders' self-evaluation of the school, and shared my key lines of enquiry. I held meetings with you, the assistant headteachers and middle leaders. I also held a meeting with three members of the governing body and a local authority representative.

I observed pupils' learning jointly with you in several lessons. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. I spoke with pupils informally and met formally with two groups of pupils. I also listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 read, and I examined samples of pupils' work.

In addition to this, I considered a range of documents. These included the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and attainment. I considered the parents' free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's own surveys. I reviewed the school's safeguarding practices. The school's website was also checked to confirm whether it meets the requirements on the publication of specified information.