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Dear Miss Taylor

Short inspection of Lugwardine Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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.

Under your leadership, academic standards have followed an upward path. Since 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics has risen each year.

Your informed, organised, systematic and evaluative approach to school leadership has ensured that other aspects of the school's work have also strengthened. Within the school, there are clear lines of communication, and pupils, staff and governors understand what is expected from them. You and your team have kept up to date with training and have put effective and supportive systems in place to keep pupils safe and to promote good behaviour. Pupils look smart, wear full school uniform, attend regularly and are polite, friendly and cheerful in class.

All the recommendations from the previous inspection have been acted on. Subject leaders lead their subjects with confidence and enthusiasm. The early years provision gives children a great start to school, and teaching in all classes helps to bring out the best in pupils.

Looking to the future, the level of challenge in mathematics is not sharp enough for more of the most able pupils to reach the higher standards. In addition, there are inconsistencies in pupils' spelling and aspects of communication with parents.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. In fact, the leadership of safeguarding is excellent. During this inspection, your thorough and systematic approach to safety and welfare matters shone out.

All staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Similarly, pupils know that adults in school will always listen and help them if they have a problem. When concerns do arise, staff are quick to act and they make sure that they record and share information with the right people at the right time.

Through assemblies and lessons, pupils are taught how to respect themselves and others and to keep themselves safe. The school puts on information events for parents about matters such as internet safety, and visiting speakers also support the school's work in this area. A notable feature of school life is your team's attention to pupils' well-being. To this end, the school has numerous routines for supporting pupils' mental health and self-esteem.

All the necessary checks on staff and visitors are carried out and recorded correctly. Medicines in school are kept in the right place and first-aid treatment is available when needed.

Inspection findings

- Over the past three years, standards in reading at the end of Year 6 have risen year after year. In 2018, the proportions of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected standard for their age were both above the national average. This three-year trend of improvement is a reflection of the very positive reading culture in the school. In all classes, pupils read regularly, both for pleasure and as part of their school work, and benefit from being read to by adults. In addition, teachers pay systematic attention to developing pupils' literacy skills. As soon as pupils start school, they begin to learn letter sounds and have many opportunities to explore and enjoy words and language.
- Indeed, the early years classroom provides an ideal start to children's learning and school life. The classroom is a welcoming and engaging place with lots to see, touch and do. It is crammed full of activities and resources that prompt children's curiosity, cooperation, discussion and independence. Staff are jolly, reassuring and they set high standards. There is a calm excitement about learning, and children's efforts and achievements are noticed and praised. Whether building sculptures out of 'snow dough', enjoying role play, curling up with a book or practising their early writing or counting, children have fun, grow in confidence and learn a lot.
- This great start sets the foundation for learning in the rest of the school and, in all classes, pupils continue to do well. As they move from one year to the next, pupils' reading goes from strength to strength, and their writing also develops and improves. In all classes, staff focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Attractive displays about classroom topics and desktop prompt cards remind pupils about the meanings and use of words. Similarly, staff routinely require

pupils to share and review their work with one another, so that they develop a critical eye and the self-motivation to refine and improve their writing. Even so, in the recent past, inaccurate spelling has limited the quality of some pupils' writing. You are alert to this and staff have recently changed their approach to the teaching of spelling. You have introduced a daily spelling lesson that focuses on spelling rules, and this is starting to pay off. During this inspection, I saw pupils readily reaching for dictionaries and calling on their growing knowledge of spelling patterns to select and check words.

- As with English, mathematics teaching is also effective. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and present information clearly. Work in pupils' books shows a logical sequence of learning, and guidance from staff helps them to learn from their success and mistakes. Teaching ensures that pupils get plenty of practice, and staff are quick to provide extra work for pupils who are ready to push on further. Having said this, some of this extra mathematics work for the most able pupils does not necessarily require any deeper thinking or knowledge. For instance, during this inspection, some older pupils who had completed their work on division or proportion moved on to new work that just involved different numbers. The level of challenge was much the same as the work they had just completed. The tasks helped to build fluency but, for some pupils, the work was well within their grasp and their time could have been used more productively.
- On a very positive note, teachers are quick to seize on links with learning in different subjects. During this inspection, for example, a teacher praised pupils' work in mathematics by telling them they were 'on fire', before prompting the class to confirm, in enthusiastic and collective voice, that the phrase was an idiom. This instance typifies the good-natured and learning-focused dialogue between pupils and staff, which puts pupils at ease while reminding them to apply what they know.
- Indeed, enthusiasm for learning, good conduct in class and happy, trouble-free play outside are usually the norm. Teachers make their expectations crystal clear, and pupils know that good behaviour is noticed and rewarded, and that poor behaviour is challenged. The school's leaders routinely analyse pupils' behaviour records in order to spot any patterns, and you make sure parents are suitably informed. In their responses to Ofsted's questionnaires, most parents and pupils expressed positive views about behaviour and the way it is managed in school. A few, however, felt differently. This inspection found that the school's systems for responding to different types of behaviour are well organised, efficient and fair and ensure that pupils get the praise they deserve or the support they need. However, school leaders are not convincing all parents about aspects of behaviour in school.
- The school provides a broad and worthwhile curriculum. Pupils, staff and parents all commented positively on the interesting events and trips that happen each term. During this inspection, the variety of school life was plain to see. In addition to their daily English and mathematics lessons, I saw pupils taking part in a very active martial arts session, while others tried their hand at 'green screening' as they made an informative film about the planets. Elsewhere, pupils were building models of mountains, imagining life as a storybook character, or finding out about life in Antarctica. Around the school, display boards are covered

with examples of pupils' recent work in science, history, geography and art. Pupils evidently learn a lot about many different things at Lugwardine Primary Academy.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue with work to improve pupils' spelling
- raise standards higher in mathematics by making sure that the most able pupils are given suitably challenging work when they are ready for it
- look for ways to improve communication with parents about routines for rewarding and managing pupils' behaviour.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and members of the staff team. I also met with two governors and the school's business manager. I carried out short observations of teaching and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons and at breaktime. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. By the end of the inspection, there were 71 recent responses on Parent View and 49 free-text responses. I took account of these and also considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 64 responses to Ofsted's pupils' questionnaire. I looked at several documents, including the school's evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, behaviour records, external reports about the school, information about governance, and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I asked the staff, pupils and parents about safeguarding matters.