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Mrs Sue Teague
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Dear Mrs Teague

Short inspection of Caddington Village School

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 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 November 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Caddington Village School is a calm, welcoming and nurturing place where staff help pupils to develop well, academically, emotionally, socially and personally. Pupils enjoy being at the school, learn well, and subsequently thrive. They are happy, ambitious and display positive attitudes towards their learning, school and each other. Over time, you and your leaders, along with governors, have successfully established an aspirational culture for all pupils. The whole staff team ensures that the school is a very kind, caring place for the pupils to develop in all aspects of their life.

Parents trust and respect leaders and the staff team and appreciate the help that the school provides for families in the community. In the responses to the Ofsted free-text system, one parent refers to the school as 'a well-oiled machine' and another, reflecting the views of many others, commented: '... an absolutely fantastic school with staff who are dedicated and passionate about everything that they do. The pupils always come first and are at the heart of our community.'

You and your leaders, including governors, promote forward-thinking and innovative approaches in all you do. For example, leaders have carefully explored the unique needs of their community and the pupils they care for to develop their personal, social and health education curriculum. The school's chosen programme is

promoting pupils' self-esteem and confidence in a meaningful way that helps them to become better, more resilient learners. Pupils are consulted about what they want to learn, and parents say: 'We like that we have been asked at parents' evenings about our thoughts on curriculum development and what else students should be taught at Caddington Village School.' This contributes towards the school successfully being an active part of the community.

Caddington Village School is federated with Slip End Village School. The quality of education is supported well by the school being part of the federation. Leaders and governors gave a range of examples of how the training, sharing of good practice and school-to-school checks on the accuracy of assessment information are helping improve the quality of their work. Inspection evidence further confirms their views.

There has been a sustained focus on the areas to improve identified in the previous inspection. Leaders have continued to check the quality of teaching and learning and ensure greater consistency in supporting pupils to improve, and in adults' questioning skills. This has resulted in improving outcomes for pupils. Consequently, at the end of their primary experience, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that maintaining pupils' safety and well-being is their priority. Staff receive advice and information about safeguarding as part of their induction. This means that staff are well informed and know about the school's processes for keeping pupils safe. Systems to ensure that all adults receive the training they need are efficient and managed well.

The special educational needs coordinator and pastoral coordinator work well with families and other agencies to support vulnerable pupils, including making timely referrals to a wide range of external professionals.

Governors regularly check the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe. Governors have completed safer recruitment training, putting their skills and expertise to good effect when recruiting staff and during the regular safeguarding checks undertaken within the school.

Inspection findings

- The school's inclusive approach and ethos is a strength. At the core of this is well-trained staff who know pupils well and the exceptionally positive relationships between adults and pupils. Leaders plan appropriate provision that ensures that pupils can access learning in their own way and, consequently, achieve well.
- Overwhelmingly, parents, including those with children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are very positive about the care, in-depth consideration of their children's needs and the encouragement their children receive.

- Pupils' well-being is taken very seriously. Quiet spaces such as 'the emoji room' are provided for pupils who wish to use them. Pupils appreciate and use these rooms appropriately.
- Pupils are supportive and empathetic towards each other. This results in all pupils feeling they 'belong' at Caddington and they therefore try hard. Subsequently, their wide range of academic and emotional and personal needs are met well.
- Over time, leaders have established effective procedures to monitor and review teaching and learning regularly throughout the school. Most leaders identify concisely the areas for improvement in teaching to support pupils' learning. Although this information provides invaluable support for teachers, aspects of this in key stage 1 are not rigorous enough to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently effective.
- Leaders have also focused on improving writing since the previous inspection. Leaders' philosophy of 'good readers make good writers' is reflected throughout the school. The priority is to immerse pupils in books, develop their love of reading and increase pupils' engagement in reading as a model to transfer and use in their own writing.
- You and your leaders have worked hard to review the whole-school approach to the teaching of writing. Teachers apply a consistently agreed approach to teaching the processes of writing. Pupils have ample opportunities to apply their learned skills, making their writing interesting and extending their vocabulary and grammar through the use of ambitious texts and purposeful discussion. For example, in science Year 4 pupils wrote effectively about their investigation about which liquids cause the least damage to egg shells. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils skilfully recorded their knowledge and understanding about volcanoes.
- Leaders have recently introduced steps to improve spelling and handwriting across the school. The focus on developing these basic English skills is helping pupils to improve the quality of their writing. Staff consistently address incorrect spelling, reminding pupils of spelling rules or encouraging them to use their knowledge of phonics. Leaders continue to evaluate the impact of the approaches used to improve pupils' spelling and develop the school's chosen cursive handwriting script.
- Pupils apply their grammar and punctuation skills with increasing accuracy. More often pupils choose interesting vocabulary to make their writing more exciting to read. They edit and improve their own and other pupils' writing with confidence and apply their knowledge and understanding effectively. Pupils' books, and the writing on display, demonstrate that pupils write with precision and care. Leaders' regular checks on pupils' progress in writing confirm that pupils are developing as better-quality writers.
- My final line of enquiry during this inspection was to evaluate the effectiveness of the leaders' actions to ensure that pupils attend as often as they should. Although leaders' high expectations and well-considered strategies are making a positive difference, attendance remains an area to improve.
- Staff carefully check pupils' attendance and rigorously follow up absences with parents, offering support but at the same time being clear about the expectations

for pupils to attend school every day. This includes younger children in early years. Leaders strongly discourage term-time holidays due to their adverse impact on pupils' learning. The school regularly celebrates those pupils with positive attendance and has a wide range of strategies to promote and encourage this.

- You and your leaders have increased pupil and parental awareness of the importance of attendance through, for example, regular updates in newsletters and publicity in the school's reception area, where pupils can see how well they are doing. Although there remains an inconsistent overall picture, evaluation of the attendance information over time shows that the attendance of pupils has improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in key stage 1 improves so that pupils make stronger progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics
- continued work is undertaken with parents to ensure that everyone has a shared understanding of the importance of pupils attending school every day.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders, the school's local authority representative and improvement partner, governors, staff and pupils. We visited all classes including the 'quiet room' and the 'emoji room' and looked specifically at pupils' writing.

I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including areas such as safeguarding, attendance, the use of additional funding, the school's development plan, reports to governors and other school documents.

Additionally, I considered 71 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 64 responses to the Ofsted free-text system received, as well as emails received from representative parents. There were no responses to the pupil survey. However, I spoke to pupils in classrooms and observed pupils at work, including

those pupils who access the 'quiet' and 'emoji' rooms on a regular basis. There were no responses to the staff survey but I had conversations with staff throughout the inspection.