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Mr Ian Taylor
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Taylor

Short inspection of Ernesford Grange Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time.

You and your leadership team lead and manage the school very well. Since taking on the role of headteacher, you have led the school with vision and drive. You have ensured that pupils' learning and well-being are at the centre of the school's work.

You and your leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development. You have been reflective and forward thinking, and have improved the curriculum for all pupils. Pupils benefit from an exciting curriculum which provides them with memorable experiences. The Ernesford Grange Skills Academy Clubs are a particular highlight of the week and pupils enjoy a wide range of curricular experiences such as forest schools, sewing, art and crafts, gymnastics, yoga, dance and cooking.

Parents are very positive about the school, as they showed in their responses to the Parent View survey, where almost all said they would recommend the school. The school has established a positive climate for learning and a nurturing ethos throughout the school that is supported by strong relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and care. Pupils recognise that the Ernesford Grange '3 Rs' of respect, responsibility and resilience are at the centre of the school. They told me that these values are shared by all pupils. Pupils behave very well in class and around the school, including during breaktimes and lunchtime. Pupils enjoy talking about their work and their achievements.

Pupils are proud of their school and they are eager to learn. They talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of lessons and say that teachers make learning fun and interesting. They appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities that they can attend, including craft, sports and debating clubs, and enjoy learning to play a musical instrument. Pupils value the lunchtime and breaktime activities which include table tennis, yoga and board games. Older pupils enjoy residential trips and the opportunity to work together and challenge themselves.

Governors are supportive of the school and recognise that since your appointment, you and your leadership team have enhanced the school. They acknowledge that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved significantly since your appointment. They appreciate the training that has been provided to ensure that they can hold leaders accountable for school performance.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to improve the level of challenge for pupils, particularly the most able. In 2017 and 2018 attainment for the most able pupils at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average at the higher standard in reading and mathematics. This is as a result of the actions taken by leaders. The proportion of pupils that attained at greater depth in writing was similar to the national average. However, progress in writing was below that of other pupils nationally. School leaders have quite rightly identified that improving writing outcomes remains a priority for the school. Leaders have introduced new strategies for the teaching of writing and currently standards are improving rapidly.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and there is a strong culture in the school of keeping pupils safe. Staff have a thorough understanding about their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding pupils. Staff are well trained and they know how to raise concerns about pupils' welfare or safety. Leaders check the effectiveness of this training through regular updates and reviews.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are appropriately trained. The school's single central record is accurate and contains all the relevant information. All staff are familiar with the school's electronic system for recording concerns about pupils, however small. The school's records show that when a risk to pupils arises, leaders work effectively with parents to protect children. They involve other agencies when required and persevere until they know that pupils' needs have been fully met.

Pupils feel safe and are happy at school. Pupils commented on the fact that bullying is rare and that they feel confident that if they have any worries or concerns, an

adult would sort them out swiftly. Pupils know how to stay safe when online. For example, they informed me, 'You don't talk to strangers online and should never give out your personal information.'

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry during the inspection related to the teaching of most-able pupils in key stage 1. In recent years, the proportion of pupils attaining at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national average. You and your leadership team have supported teachers to challenge the most able pupils regularly in key stage 1. Teachers ensure that pupils have more opportunities to plan what they are going to write through role play and storytelling opportunities.
- Teachers have taught pupils to write in a cursive style and pupils are encouraged to take pride in their handwriting and presentation.
- Pupils' mathematics books show that they spend too much time practising their arithmetic skills. Opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to problems, or to reason mathematically, are limited. This is because, across the school, some teachers lack confidence in teaching these aspects of mathematics.
- I also looked at how well the most able pupils are achieving in writing in key stage 2. This is because the progress of this group was below average in 2017 and 2018 at the end of key stage 2 and pupils have not made good progress from their starting points. You and your team have taken swift action to improve outcomes in writing for all pupils in key stage 2. You have supported teachers with improving their subject knowledge so that they can plan and challenge pupils successfully. Teachers use incisive questioning to ensure that pupils are challenged consistently.
- Pupils read high-quality books. These books have helped improve pupils' understanding of how a text is written. They have applied and used this understanding to develop their own writing. Pupils know how to edit and improve their work and use an effective range of vocabulary and punctuation. Leaders have supported teachers to improve their practice further with the opportunity to work with other teachers in the local network of schools.
- From observing lessons, talking to pupils and looking at their books, we could see evidence that writing is now strong across the curriculum. Handwriting is a strength in the majority of classes and presentation is typically good. Pupils' books show that teachers challenge the most able pupils to use a wide range of vocabulary and an increasing range of writing techniques.
- I also looked at the effectiveness of leadership since the previous inspection. Your determination to achieve the very best for pupils has underpinned the improvements to all aspects of the school. You have created a community ethos where the morale of both staff and pupils is high. Senior and middle leaders are a unified group with a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their strong focus on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at the heart of the school's successful development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills, so that more pupils make greater progress by the end of key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Edward Masterson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders and discussed my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the subject leaders and the designated safeguarding leader. I considered 50 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 47 free-text comments. I also took into account 13 responses to the staff survey and 29 responses to the pupil survey. I visited classes in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2, and I looked at examples of pupils' work. I spoke to pupils and I also studied a range of documentation covering different aspects of the school's work.