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9 April 2019

Mrs Patricia Scott
Headteacher
Loxdale Primary School
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Dear Mrs Scott

Short inspection of Loxdale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your aim that children will have 'high aspirations and a sense of moral responsibility' is reflected in the work of staff and pupils. You and the leadership team, including governors, have identified the school's key priorities and put appropriate plans in place to address them. Your leadership is strong; you provide a clear vision and set high expectations for all to achieve. Since September, you have introduced a new curriculum and a new approach to checking how well pupils are doing while also overseeing the building of a new school. Since the previous inspection, you and the governors have restructured the leadership team and managed significant staffing changes. These changes have resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, and outcomes for pupils, over the last three years.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. You and the deputy headteacher are at the school gate every morning to welcome pupils. Pupils and parents like this. Some parents I spoke to said that this helped to nip in the bud any problems that otherwise might have taken up more time. Your presence has also helped you to promote the importance of good attendance for all pupils. The great majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are very positive about the work of the school. Two comments sum up the views of many who responded: 'A lovely, nurturing school. Friendly and approachable staff. Knowing my child feels very happy and safe here means I am happy', and 'My child is making good progress and is well cared for.'

Pupils are respectful and polite to each other and to visitors. They have many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility. As a result, many pupils speak articulately and behave with a maturity that is beyond their years. They are confident and ready to move on to the next stage of their education. One pupil said: 'This is a unique school. I am proud I come to this school every day.' Pupils respect and are knowledgeable about the diverse cultures and faiths present in the school. Displays celebrate the rich cultural experiences pupils have, such as residential trips and the 'marathon missions' to increase their fitness levels.

The corridors are vividly decorated and bring learning to life. In one area, pupils are encouraged to act as explorers to complete missions and find out information about different subjects. In another area, displays remind pupils of their rights and responsibilities to become good citizens.

Your ambition and vision for the school are shared by all staff. Leaders and staff work as one to drive improvements with a strong sense of teamwork. Staff feel motivated and respected. They spoke positively about the support you give them and how your leadership has helped to move the school forward. The middle leaders who have responsibility for improving the quality of leadership in subjects such as science and English have begun to share good practice more widely. This is to develop the effectiveness of those who have responsibility for coordinating teaching in different subjects in other schools.

You have ensured that the school's strengths have been built upon since the previous inspection. At that time, inspectors asked you to improve further the quality of teaching in the lower years of the school and provide greater challenge for the most able pupils. You have achieved this by giving staff the opportunity to share strong practice. Teachers now work together and this collaboration is helping to increase the level of challenge in learning. Teachers regularly adapt activities for pupils to make them appropriately thought-provoking for higher-attaining pupils. This is evident in mathematics in Year 2, where teachers challenge pupils to use reasoning and problem-solving to explain their calculations and work with more challenging numbers. As a result, the most able pupils make stronger progress in their learning. Over time, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards at the end of key stage 1 has increased.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the challenges to safety and well-being that some local pupils and families experience. Leaders and staff are vigilant to signs of pupils being unhappy or at risk. You ensure that the curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe and being respected. Staff display clear messages about safeguarding in pupil-friendly ways throughout the school. Pupils feel safe at school. They say that on the rare occasions when they feel their classmates are being unkind to them, this gets resolved quickly. Parents also feel their children are safe in school.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and there is a strong safeguarding team in school. Staff are fully trained to recognise and respond to risks to pupils. As a result, they act promptly when concerns arise. You make sure that several staff who have completed high-level training in safeguarding are available to attend multi-agency meetings or deal with concerns from colleagues, offering comprehensive support to pupils and families in need. Governors' understanding of safeguarding is constantly evolving because leaders give them guidance and training that are matched to their needs. Staff and leaders record concerns about pupils' care and protection carefully. Leaders review information meticulously. They make timely and detailed referrals to other agencies, following these up if it is deemed necessary.

Inspection findings

- As part of the inspection we looked at the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils and whether pupil premium funding is being used effectively to maximise their progress. You have worked with the leadership team to ensure that there are regular checks on the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils. You use this 'data message information' to ensure that all teachers improve aspects of their performance to meet the needs of these pupils. This was highlighted during our visits to classrooms and when we looked at work in pupils' books.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively and this makes a real difference to the progress of disadvantaged pupils. You ensure that most disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, receive appropriately tailored pastoral and academic support. As a result, many disadvantaged pupils now make consistently good progress across the school.
- However, a large proportion of your disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For these pupils, provision is not as well matched to their needs as it could be. Gaps in their knowledge are sometimes not addressed and their progress is limited as a result. This was evident in our visits to classrooms and when looking at pupils' books. We saw variation in the quality and effectiveness of support given by teaching assistants to disadvantaged pupils of different abilities. Where it was strong, tasks were well matched to pupils' needs and teaching assistants prompted and encouraged these pupils to make impressive gains in their learning.
- Another area that we considered was the progress of lower-attaining pupils in mathematics in key stage 2. This was because published data from national assessments in 2018 showed that attainment and progress had slowed compared to the national figures. You have acted quickly and targeted this as an immediate area for improvement. Your leader for mathematics is knowledgeable and determined that all pupils should have access to high-quality mathematics teaching. He attends relevant training and works alongside staff, improving teaching across the school. Bespoke training is implemented to deepen teachers' knowledge and skills. This has ensured an increased focus on developing pupils' fluency, problem-solving and reasoning, which could be seen in pupils' books.
- Our learning walks, reviews of pupils' books with other leaders and the school's current assessment information confirm that middle-attaining and higher-

attaining pupils across the school are making strong progress and greater proportions of pupils are now attaining at the higher standard. However, the progress of lower-attaining pupils over time in books is not as strong because they have too many gaps in their knowledge, and tasks are sometimes not well matched to their needs.

- My final line of enquiry was to find out how effectively provision across the curriculum meets pupils' needs and enables them to make strong progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. You have a strong rationale to support the implementation of your new curriculum and have begun to develop it to ensure breadth and depth of coverage, as well as making links between subjects where appropriate. As a result, pupils study a range of interesting topics which also enable them to develop personally, including their resilience, confidence and independence. Your staff also plan regular trips and visitors to school to bring learning to life, as well as providing a range of extra-curricular activities to broaden pupils' experiences.
- Currently, you are ensuring that the curriculum focuses on developing pupils' reading and writing skills, particularly in key stage 2. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' high attainment in English. However, pupils do not consistently make strong progress in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Although teachers plan interesting and stimulating activities that cover the national curriculum, these do not always build on their previous learning to allow pupils to gain a deep understanding of subject knowledge. Your leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics have started to make checks on the quality of teaching and learning, but the impact of their work is not yet evident.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- provision for pupils with SEND is well matched to their needs so that they make good progress from their starting points
- in mathematics, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, particularly for lower-attaining pupils, to address gaps in their mathematical knowledge
- they further embed the new curriculum, to help pupils develop a depth of knowledge and understanding that builds on their prior learning in a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Knowles
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher and the leaders who are responsible for pupil premium, SEND, mathematics and the development of curriculum and subject leadership. Together, we met leaders who are responsible for safeguarding and the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. I held a meeting with a representative from the local authority and met with seven members of the governing body. I gathered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also met with a group of pupils who took me on a tour of the school and spoke to me about their experiences of school. Together with you, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator, we observed learning across the school and looked at examples of pupils' work. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's evaluation of its performance, plans for improvement and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I scrutinised safeguarding policies and practice, including systems for the safe recruitment of staff.