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Sarah Flannigan
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Dear Sarah Flannigan

Short inspection of Denham Green E-Act Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 14 May 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your leadership team have taken very effective actions to refine the curriculum. You have chosen challenging and interesting fiction and non-fiction books to connect the learning journeys pupils undertake across all subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils read a book about the explorer Ernest Shackleton. This book is used as the basis of a wide range of interesting and challenging learning activities for Year 5 pupils to engage in. As a result, pupils develop extensive subject knowledge and skills in English, history, geography and other subjects, based on the book's content. The sequence of learning and the connections pupils develop across many subjects is very evident. Pupils make very strong progress. You have effective checking systems which provide you and your leaders with an accurate view of the high standards of teaching and learning in the school. You are relentless in ensuring that teaching consistently meets your very high expectations for all pupils to be challenged to learn more.

You have detailed strategic plans in place to make the curriculum even stronger. Your next step is to consider how you evaluate the impact of the curriculum changes on pupils knowing even more subject-specific knowledge and skills, so that

pupils make more links across the topics they study and continue to make such strong progress.

You have created a purposeful and happy environment for learning. Pupils have time built in to the day where they learn techniques to help them focus on their personal and social welfare. Pupils have mindfulness activities, including learning yoga, as part of their curriculum. You play tranquil music across the school at the start of the day to help pupils begin their day calmly and ready to learn. Your emphasis on promoting the pupils' awareness of their own and others' well-being is very effective. Pupils enjoy school greatly and are very happy at school. Pupils are very well prepared to learn. They thrive in the positive, caring school environment.

You have very high expectations for pupils to always behave respectfully. This was very evident in the morning assembly during the inspection. Pupils sang together well and clearly enjoyed this opportunity. Pupils listened intently to their teachers' instructions during the assembly and were very well behaved. Pupils' behaviour across the school at other times during the inspection, including playtimes, was exemplary.

Leaders have developed a supportive community ethos highly valued by parents and pupils. Parents spoken to by the inspector and those who completed the online Ofsted survey, Parent View, were full of praise for the school. Parents particularly value the pre-school and after-school activities provided by staff. Many pupils attend and enjoy a wide range of activities including sports clubs such as football and multi-skills, cookery club, homework club and the very popular dance club.

Leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is very strong. Leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils' individual needs. Leaders work closely with class teachers and very well-trained and effective teaching assistants to support pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress towards their individual targets.

You work very closely with those responsible for governance of the school. Regular visits to the school by trust leaders check the impact of leaders' work on achieving school priorities. Trustees have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas you are working on. Trustees hold you to account very effectively through the trust's scheme of delegation. Trust leaders work collaboratively with you and your leaders and with parent advisors. As a result, the school has securely strengthened its position from the previous inspection, successfully tackling all recommendations made at that time.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You and leaders have created a culture where pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parents agree with children's views.

Pupils learn about many age-appropriate personal, social, health and welfare topics.

The school's 'Wow' room is a central part of school culture, providing a designated space for pupils to learn strategies to help their own and others' well-being.

You and your staff are well trained and knowledgeable about your safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders keep accurate records of any concerns raised about children's safety and welfare. Leaders respond in a timely and effective manner if any worries are raised about a child. You work well with other agencies and are tenacious in your approach to secure the best possible support for vulnerable pupils and their families. As a result, vulnerable pupils are very well supported.

Trustees, through their scheme of delegation, often check that the school's safeguarding procedures are appropriate. Trustees' overview of the school's safeguarding procedures and practice is very effective.

You work well with the on-site nursery's leaders and have ensured that all appropriate safeguarding checks are in place to support this close working relationship.

Inspection findings

- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge well to plan appropriately interesting and challenging learning activities for all pupils. Pupils have many occasions to develop their creative, geographical, historical and technological skills. Pupils also have specialist music teaching in a well-resourced music room as well as specialist physical education (PE) teaching. Teachers help pupils make useful connections between the topics they are learning. They provide many opportunities for pupils to write about these topics for different audiences and purposes. For example, Year 4 pupils wrote creative diary entries about being part of Ulysses' crew on the Odyssey journey. Pupils make very good progress in developing their subject-specific knowledge and skills.
- Since the last inspection your work to improve pupils' attendance at school has been very effective. Leaders regularly analyse pupil attendance figures and implement appropriate systems to support pupils and families where attendance may be a concern. In this way, you have quickly reduced the rates of persistent absence and these are now better than national figures. Leaders have worked well with the very few pupils who need support to meet leaders' high expectations for appropriate behaviour in school. Consequently, there have been very few fixed-term exclusions since the previous inspection and none this academic year.
- Leaders use the additional funding they receive to support disadvantaged pupils very effectively. Leaders have implemented many helpful strategies to support pupils. For example, the school's nurture room provides a place for pupils to receive extra support with their learning. Teachers plan effectively to support disadvantaged pupils so that, in 2018, disadvantaged pupils reached standards close to or better than other pupils with similar starting points at the end of both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Current disadvantaged pupils are making even stronger progress. Provision for disadvantaged pupils is a strength of the school.

- Leaders' work to address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report has been very effective. Leaders have invested well in redesigning and developing the outdoor provision for children in the early years. Teaching in the early years uses both the indoor and outdoor spaces well to engage children in interesting and challenging activities. Children in the early years work well together in groups and also independently. Teaching assistants support children in the early years extremely well by asking probing questions and modelling work clearly to help children improve their writing and number skills. Leadership strategies to help children in the early years develop effective learning skills are innovative and successful. Children make very good progress in the early years.
- Leaders' work to develop the curriculum to challenge most-able pupils to learn and achieve more has been successful. For example, the school's mathematics 'do it, twist it and solve it' strategy effectively challenges all pupils, particularly the most able, to attempt and solve more complex mathematical problems accurately. Consequently, most-able pupils make very good progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- The successful work to develop the curriculum continues, so that leaders hone their understanding of the impact of curriculum changes on pupils' subject-specific knowledge and skills, helping pupils to make even stronger progress in their learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer or equivalent of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Buckinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dylan Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. He observed learning in most classes, jointly with the headteacher and special educational needs coordinator. He reviewed work in several pupils' books and discussed pupils' progress and attainment with leaders. The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons and playtime and heard some pupils read. The inspector took account of 21 survey responses submitted by pupils. Parents' views were considered through informal discussions before school and 41 parent replies to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector took account of 21 survey responses completed by staff. He checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding. The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with

children. The inspector reviewed the school's evaluation and planning documentation and other school information, including the pupils' performance information that is available publicly. The inspector met with a regional director, responsible for educational standards, of the multi-academy trust. The inspector spoke with a trustee and with a member of the academy advisory group.