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Ms Fiona Oastler
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Oastler

Short inspection of Devonshire Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 May 2019 with Gill Bal, Ofsted Inspector, 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 last inspection.

You and your leaders work well together and are constantly looking to improve. You evaluate the quality of education accurately and implement appropriate plans for development. Since the previous inspection, you have successfully addressed the points for improvement identified in the report. As a result, your most-able pupils attain highly by the time they leave to go to secondary school. Achievement in reading is also an area of strength.

You nurture a strong sense of community at Devonshire, where everyone is included. A wide range of cultures, languages and religions are represented within the school community. This diversity is celebrated. Parents and carers typically spoke of a happy, friendly school where leaders are approachable and willing to listen and help. All staff and pupils reported that they are proud to be members of the school. Pupils enjoy contributing to school life as school councillors, eCadets and members of the eco-group.

Governors are incredibly supportive of the work of leaders. They develop their understanding of the school by carrying out regular visits and meeting with pupils, parents and staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Where you have concerns about attendance, you employ a range of strategies to make sure it improves. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced significantly since September. Parents say that their children love coming to school and particularly enjoy trips and special events such as circus skills and Bollywood dancing workshops.

Pupils feel safe at school. Most pupils believe that incidents of bullying are rare and issues are quickly resolved. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, believe that leaders deal effectively with bullying and that their child is safe at school. The number of fixed-term exclusions at the school has reduced over time. These exclusions are used alongside other interventions, such as play therapy and specialist support for children and their families. Pupils told us that sometimes the organisation of the outdoor space leads to problems at playtime. Leaders are taking steps to resolve their concerns by reorganising and developing this area.

Safeguarding arrangements are well managed and fit for purpose. You make sure that training for staff is continually updated to include the most recent statutory guidance. The designated safeguarding lead understands the risks to your pupils and follows up concerns thoroughly. This involves working with external agencies, including the local authority social care team and the police.

Inspection findings

- In discussion with the inspection team, you identified writing as a key area for development at the school. We agreed this would be our first line of enquiry. In 2018, attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average at both the expected and higher standards. Progress was average, and lower than in previous years. Outcomes in writing at the end of Reception and key stage 1 were also below the national average. Leaders have analysed this assessment information and have made changes to the curriculum as a result. During the inspection, we looked at the impact of the work carried out by leaders to improve pupils' achievement in writing.
- We visited lessons with leaders. Pupils were learning how to write for different purposes: Reception pupils were writing lists; Year 2 pupils were writing non-chronological reports about sharks; and Year 4 pupils were writing their own myths. Teachers were teaching grammar within the context of the writing and challenging pupils to use ambitious vocabulary.
- The progress of writing in pupils' books since September has been good, particularly in key stage 2. There is evidence of improvements in sentence structure, handwriting and spelling. Where the teaching of writing is at its best, it is structured and systematic; expectations of teachers and pupils are high and pupils are encouraged to write at length. Leaders acknowledge that there is variation in the quality of teaching in writing, particularly in Reception and key stage 1. As such, writing remains a development focus for the school.

- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is a priority on your school development plan. Typically, pupils in this group attain less well than non-disadvantaged pupils at the end of each key stage, in all subjects. Our second line of enquiry focused on the impact of the school's pupil premium spending strategy.
- We visited lessons with leaders and saw how disadvantaged pupils are supported in different ways. Teachers understand their pupils well and they carefully plan interventions for each child. These interventions are recorded on class provision maps. Teaching assistants were working effectively with some pupils in class and supporting other pupils in small groups outside the classroom.
- English and mathematics books belonging to disadvantaged pupils show evidence of good progress since September. The school's assessment information also indicates that this group of pupils are making progress, often as much progress as non-disadvantaged pupils. However, although progress is better this academic year than it was last year, disadvantaged pupils are still achieving less well than non-disadvantaged pupils. The school's current pupil premium spending strategy is disjointed and unclear. This area remains a priority for leaders and governors to address.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to strengthen provision in writing, particularly in Reception and key stage 1, so that all pupils make good or better progress
- develop a comprehensive pupil premium spending strategy to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good or better progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Franklin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- met school staff and held discussions with you and senior leaders
- undertook joint visits to lessons with your leaders
- scrutinised pupils' work with leaders
- met with a group of pupils and asked them their views on the school

- listened to pupils read
- met with representatives from the governing body
- had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative
- reviewed a range of documents, including those that relate to safeguarding and the school's self-evaluation
- analysed the 56 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey
- analysed the 41 responses to the staff survey
- analysed the 89 responses to the pupil survey.