

20 June 2019

Mr Steve Kendrick
Headteacher
Ashfield Park Primary School
Redhill Road
Ross-on-Wye
Herefordshire
HR9 5AU

Dear Mr Kendrick

Short inspection of Ashfield Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your arrival as headteacher in September 2017, you have provided clear, direct leadership that is valued by pupils, parents and staff. You have built on the school's existing strengths and tackled areas where improvement has been needed. Consequently, the school has improved and continues to do so.

Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. Staff form a dedicated team, committed to providing the best possible education for pupils. You are all clear about the education you want to provide. Specifically, you want pupils to become enthusiastic learners with high aspirations. You want pupils to enjoy a rich variety of experiences that prepare them well for life after school. You want pupils to be 'inspired for life'. Although areas for improvement remain, you are already seeing considerable success in realising your educational vision.

Pupils enjoy their lessons. They have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They appreciate the wide variety of experiences the school offers them. Pupils told me how much they enjoy coming to school, as did several parents with whom I spoke. One parent, who responded to Parent View, summed up the views of many when they wrote, 'Ashfield Park is a lovely, friendly school with great teaching staff. They are always helpful, and my child is doing fantastically well.'

At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with improving the teaching of mathematics and with ensuring that all staff receive appropriate support and

training. These areas have been addressed successfully. Mathematics is taught well throughout the school. Staff value the training and support that leaders provide.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a strong culture of care for pupils and their families. Leaders provide families with a range of services on the school site, including family support and advice with parenting. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet, through regular lessons and assemblies. Staff also provide guidance for parents that helps them and their children know how to stay safe online.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are clear, understood by all and fit for purpose. Staff have been trained comprehensively and are alert to the signs that pupils might need extra help. They refer any concerns they have to leaders, who deal with these speedily and appropriately. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.

I spoke with many pupils during the inspection. All told me they feel safe in school. They said that bullying is very rare and they trust the school's adults to deal with any bullying, or other problems that arise. All parents I spoke with at the start of the day said their children feel safe in school, as did almost all who responded to Parent View.

Inspection findings

- The inspection's first focus area was on the teaching of mathematics. Improving mathematics teaching has been a focus since the previous inspection. Leaders' efforts to develop this area have proved successful and mathematics is now taught well in all years. Teachers develop pupils' basic skills by providing them with regular practice. Teaching focuses well on ensuring that pupils understand their work, rather than simply applying learned methods. Pupils routinely solve problems that make them think about the concepts being studied. Pupils regularly explain their reasoning, both verbally and in writing. This serves to deepen their understanding of the mathematics they are studying. Consequently, pupils enjoy mathematics and make good progress throughout the school.
- The second area I considered was the curriculum beyond English and mathematics. Senior and middle leaders are clear about what they intend pupils to learn in different subjects. They have set out this information clearly and ensured that pupils' learning is logically sequenced and planned. So, for example, the skills that pupils develop in physical education in any year build well on those developed in the previous year. This is the case across all subjects. However, leaders recognise that some learning schemes contain too many topics. This means that pupils sometimes do not study topics in enough depth to develop a secure understanding of the work covered.
- When the headteacher joined the school, it had no middle leaders. Developing subject leaders has been a priority over the intervening 22 months and one that has been addressed successfully. Subject leaders are enthusiastic advocates for

their subjects. They provide effective support for teachers. Senior leaders expect them to take a lead in developing the curriculum within their subjects. They are doing so successfully. However, all subject leaders are relatively new in post and some are very new to their roles. Consequently, they vary in their experience and expertise. Further developing this group remains a key priority for the school.

- Leaders have invested considerable time and energy in developing the wider curriculum, beyond taught subjects. It now provides pupils with a rich array of activities, off-site trips, residential visits and leadership opportunities. These contribute well to pupils' personal development and they serve to excite and enthuse pupils about school and learning. I observed pupils drawing in the style of the artist Georgia O'Keeffe while taking part in the school's 'arts week'. Other pupils rehearsed dances for the carnival that would take place at the end of the week. Pupils spoke to me about the recent science week where they had learned about air resistance as they designed rockets. Recent off-site visits have included trips to Gloucester Cathedral and the Masjid E Noor Mosque. During morning break I spoke with pupils who were house captains, sports leaders and digital leaders.
- The inspection's final focus area was on how well leaders and governors plan and evaluate their improvement strategies. Senior and middle leaders know the school well. They have put into place detailed plans to address areas that need to improve. However, they do not always evaluate the impact that these actions are having as well as they might. For example, subject leaders produce 'impact statements' where they attempt to evaluate how successful actions are proving. These impact statements tend to focus more on what actions have been completed rather than on the difference they have made to the quality of teaching and learning within the subject.
- Membership of the governing body has changed considerably in the last 12 months and several governors are new to the role. The governing body possesses appropriate expertise and is quickly developing its ability to scrutinise the school's work and hold leaders to account for its performance. Governors reflect on their effectiveness and are honest in recognising areas where the governing body needs to improve. For example, governors do not evaluate the impact of actions within the school improvement and pupil premium plans as well as they ought.

Next steps for the school

- Ensure that governors and leaders at all levels fully evaluate the impact that improvement strategies are having on further improving teaching and learning.
- Continue to develop subject leaders' knowledge and expertise to enhance their capacity to lead their subjects.
- Refine the curriculum content of subjects other than English and mathematics, so that pupils study all topics in sufficient depth.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Herefordshire. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders, and four members of the governing body, including its chair. I visited several classes with you or other leaders, where we observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils about their work. I talked with pupils in lessons, at breaktime and at lunchtime. I scrutinised several documents including those relating to self-evaluation and records of safeguarding and child protection. I talked with several parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I considered the 51 responses to Parent View, including the 25 free-text comments and the 28 responses from members of staff to the online inspection questionnaire.