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Mrs Phyllis King
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs King

Short inspection of Long Itchington CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 2018, 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 January 2014.

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 appointment as executive headteacher in 2015, you have formed an effective leadership partnership with your head of school. You have developed your own leadership team, that has been well supported and enabled to be effective through appropriate professional development. During this time, there has been a new chair of governors, along with a majority of new governors, enabling a range of expertise to be brought to the governing body. There has also been an increase in pupils on the school roll, due to a new local housing development.

All leaders, including governors, have a clear drive and desire for the school to continue to improve and build on the good results in 2017. Leaders and staff model how to build successful relationships through the way they interact with pupils. You have built a school ethos in which there is a mutual respect between adults and pupils. As a result, pupils also demonstrate their compassion and friendships to other pupils across the school. This was observed during the inspection at lunchtime when an older child hugged and talked to a younger pupil, because they are 'a close friend'.

Pupils who were spoken to and those in the online survey would recommend the school to another friend. The vast majority of parents and carers were complimentary about the school and one commented: 'I could not ask for more

from the staff in their care and support of my child and their education.'

You and governors particularly value the importance of the wider curriculum and are justifiably proud of your recently acquired gold awards in science and sport. Pupils were keen to share that they have the chance to learn a musical instrument in Year 4 and identified a number of trips that have enhanced their learning, for example visits to theatres, Coventry Cathedral, Lunt Roman Fort and a three-day residential in Years 5 and 6. One parent commented that their children 'get a very good start in life and are opened up to so many different opportunities and subjects'.

Pupils talked with confidence about the importance of values, and they understand how these are important in the development of a strong community and positive relationships. Pupils were also able to talk about and link knowledge of democracy to British values, but were less confident in linking their knowledge of wider values to key British values.

You also ensure that pupils have opportunities to take responsibility for different roles in school. For example, the school council has raised funds for charity through the organisation of cake sales. Year 3 pupils are very proud of their monitor roles in the classroom, and older children were seen undertaking their jobs sensibly at lunchtime and during assembly.

Outcomes have remained good since the last inspection. In the early years, more children reached the expected standard at the end of the year, compared to national figures. This is also true for the numbers of Year 1 children meeting expectations in phonics. From their different starting points, the majority of pupils in all year groups make good progress and work at the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. However, you are correct to identify, in your own evaluation, that a continued focus on writing is needed, in order for the rates of progress in this subject to match that in reading and mathematics.

You have addressed effectively the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have ensured that teachers have been able to observe high-quality practice through your work with other schools and the use of staff training. Consequently, in the staff survey, all staff agreed that training is used to challenge and support their continued improvement. Your introduction of new expectations for handwriting and the introduction of pen licenses have also ensured that the majority of books are well presented.

School improvement documentation is detailed and focuses on the correct areas. Precise targets enable governors to measure improvements and ensure clarity of focus. However, plans to spend additional funding for disadvantaged pupils are not as clear. Specific detail in these funding plans would enable governors to identify the exact impact of the spending of this fund. For example, one of the groups whose attendance remains below national levels is that of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and keep children safe. The school's single central record is compliant. The relevant documentation linked to the single central record is available immediately through effective and well-organised hyperlinks. Leaders review their safeguarding practice through an annual audit that is completed in consultation with a governor. Safeguarding records are well kept and are securely stored. Documentation is comprehensive and ensures that leaders have a robust understanding and overview of pupils' safety and needs. Leaders follow up actions quickly and ensure that pupils' needs are met.

Pupils feel safe and are able to identify events organised by the school that have developed their knowledge of safety. For example, visitors teach pupils about road safety, how to ride bikes safely and fire safety. All pupils in the survey and those spoken to in person identified that there are always adults they can go to if they feel sad or worried. Regular units of work focusing on personal, social and health education have resulted in pupils being able to define bullying clearly. Pupils agreed that bullying is a very rare occurrence and, if bullying were to occur, they are confident that staff would help resolve the problem.

Inspection findings

- You and your leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and developments of the school. Self-evaluation documentation is accurate and, as a result, your school improvement plan correctly identifies the areas that you need to work on. You are able to measure success clearly due to the specific success criteria that are expected by the end of year.
- Leaders carefully review teachers' performance through regular monitoring and, where any developments are identified, leaders respond quickly and effectively to implement support. As a result, your records identify that teaching across the school remains good. A review of a sample of books supports this judgement.
- As a result of leaders implementing successful initiatives, outcomes at the end of Year 6 in 2017 were good. Leaders employed an external mathematics consultant to support staff training. Teachers now include more opportunities for pupils to study mathematics at a deeper level. This led to an increase in the number of pupils working at national expectations and at greater depth in mathematics in 2017. As a result, progress in mathematics improved strongly. Reading progress has also remained strong. During the inspection, we reviewed the impact of leaders' actions to continue to increase the rate of writing progress, in order for it to match progress rates in reading and mathematics.
- During our learning walk, pupils were attentive and demonstrated an enthusiasm towards learning. Staff used questioning effectively and some encouraged pupils to discuss answers in pairs, in order to expand their reasoning and knowledge. In one class, we saw the impact of a recent initiative in which pupils are exposed to a range of new vocabulary, in order for the pupils to expand the use of words in their writing. As a result of this, one pupil verbalised a sentence that correctly

contained the word 'meandered', which she had learned from a previous lesson. Work in books demonstrates that this approach is being effective in widening the use of language and improving the quality of writing.

- Leaders have also increased the frequency at which pupils write at length through creating a curriculum map. This map has enabled staff to plan opportunities for pupils to apply English skills more frequently in other subjects such as history or science. Good-quality examples of writing were seen in topics such as the Romans and Anglo-Saxons.
- Leaders have introduced a new initiative in two year groups that enables pupils to talk and rehearse the plot and vocabulary in a story, before writing their own version independently. Books show that this is helping pupils practise and apply a wider-range of language. However, leaders also acknowledge that this needs further time to be embedded across the school and that continued development in writing is needed to maintain the recent improvements.
- Pupils' performance is carefully monitored and tracked by leaders. Documents show that leaders precisely identify discrepancies in the performance of different groups of pupils. As a result of leaders' analysis and subsequent meetings with staff, support groups take place for those pupils that need this extra boost. This programme has led to the vast majority of pupils and groups, including pupils who special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, making good progress from their different starting points.
- In 2017, there were slightly higher rates of fixed-term exclusions for pupils compared to national figures. Therefore, we reviewed how effectively behaviour is managed in school, through analysing records of behaviour. As a result of careful monitoring and effective support, numbers of behaviour incidents remain low, and the frequency of fixed-term exclusions has dropped during the current academic year. Leaders know pupils well and could identify how school intervention and working with agencies has made a difference to a number of pupils. The vast majority of parents and pupils and all staff identify that behaviour is consistently good at school. All staff who responded to the online survey were confident that leaders lead and support behaviour effectively.
- After the previous inspection in 2014, a new chair of governors implemented a skills audit to ensure that governors had a broad balance of skills and knowledge. As a consequence, new governors have been appointed that strengthen the expertise of the governing body. Governors visit school to partake in the school monitoring schedule, meet with pupils and work with staff, in order to gather their own knowledge about the school. This has enabled governors to review school information more effectively. Governors agree that there is a need for the expenditure of funding for disadvantaged pupils to be planned more precisely, with clearer outcomes identified, for example specific attendance targets, in order for them to measure impact.
- Rates of attendance for all pupils remained above the national average for 2017 and are in line with national figures for this current academic year. Persistent absence for all children was also lower than national figures in 2017. Leaders are proactive in ensuring that they monitor attendance and challenge and support families to improve their child's attendance. Leaders can identify examples of

where their support has improved individual pupils' attendance. However, there remain certain groups of pupils, such as pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, whose attendance, despite efforts of leaders, remains below national figures.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance improves and persistent absence reduces for all groups of pupils, in particular disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
- the progress of writing continues to improve through the embedding of current initiatives, in order for writing progress to match that of reading and mathematics
- documents identifying the expenditure of the funds for disadvantaged pupils have more detailed and precise impact targets.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Cadwallader
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your head of school, the English leader and teaching staff. I also met with three governors and spoke on the telephone to a local authority adviser. I undertook a learning walk around the school with you and/or the head of the school. We visited all classrooms, spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work in books. By the end of the inspection, there were 40 recent responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 39 free-text responses. There were 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 24 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I took account of these responses and talked with pupils formally in a group and informally individually. I also spoke to 11 parents as they arrived at school.

I looked at a number of documents, including: pupils' progress information; attendance and behaviour records; the school's own evaluation of its performance; improvement plans; information about the work of the governing body; records of checks on the quality of teaching and learning; and several school policy documents. I observed pupils' behaviour around school and I asked staff about the training they receive to help keep pupils safe. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures and checks on staff employed in the school. I checked the school website.