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11 April 2018

Mrs Sarah Tew
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Dear Mrs Tew

Short inspection of Loscoe Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

The spirit of Loscoe Primary School is captured in its motto, 'Believe, Challenge, Achieve'. This small school prides itself on nurturing a close family atmosphere. Pupils are well known as individuals and the school takes care to support their academic and pastoral development. The school is a happy and harmonious community. All staff work together to provide the very best for every pupil. As a result, pupils are ambitious, keen and confident learners.

You, and the head of school, are committed to continued improvement in order to build on the school's success. You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection. For example, pupils take great pride in their work and in their school. Pupils' workbooks are neat and tidy. Pupils play their part in ensuring that the school site is tidy, clean and litter free. You were able to explain clearly to me the many strengths of the school, as well as the areas that still need to be developed. You have evaluated the school accurately. We agreed, however, that the school's written plans for improvement are not sharp enough.

Teachers create a positive climate for learning. Relationships between adults and pupils are extremely good. Over time, the consistently good quality of teaching has resulted in good progress and achievement. Pupils enjoy well-planned and interesting lessons. The curriculum is thoughtfully enhanced through a range of

visitors, as well as a programme of visits. This successfully brings topics alive for pupils and extends their experiences beyond their own local community. Pupils are passionate about sport. They take part in a wide range of sports, both in school and competitively. The school's good work in this area leads to high levels of success at local, regional and national levels.

Despite this, over the past three years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 has been below the national average. As a result, some pupils currently in Years 3 or 4 have gaps in their phonic knowledge.

The leaders of early years have ensured that the provision has improved and secured better outcomes for children. For example, in the Reception class, the learning environment is thoughtfully organised. Children are provided with exciting learning opportunities which capture their curiosity and natural instincts to learn. A sharp focus on developing children's early reading and writing skills is paying dividends. In 2017, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was above the national average for the first time in three years.

Pupils are polite and respectful. In the playground at break- and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is calm and considerate. In lessons, pupils sustain good concentration and try hard with their work. Their notable conduct reflects the school's strong Christian ethos and effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.

Parents and carers are unanimously positive about the school. They hold you and the head of school in high regard. They praised the approachability and dedication of staff. One parent reflected the views of many, saying, 'It is a brilliant school and the staff are 100% dedicated to the school and its pupils'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. A strong culture of safeguarding is at the heart of the school's work. All required recruitment checks are made to ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children. You ensure that staff receive the necessary safeguarding training, including training relating to protecting pupils from extremism and radicalisation. All staff are highly vigilant. They are aware of the actions they need to take if they think a child protection issue has arisen.

Pupils are taught effectively about everyday risks and how to manage these in a sensible way. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe because of the strong family ethos where older pupils look out for younger ones. Pupils are taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe when they are using the internet and know the immediate actions to take if they view anything that causes them concern. Parents have every confidence that the safety and well-being of their children are paramount at Loscoe Primary.

Inspection findings

- You, and the head of school, provide effective strategic leadership. Your high ambitions for all pupils have ensured that the school has continued to move forward since the previous inspection. There is a shared determination that all pupils should be given the best chance to succeed. As a result, pupils enjoy school life together, attend regularly and make good progress.
- The chair of the governing body leads with energy and high expectations. All governors are committed and ambitious, and contribute effectively to the success of the school. They are well informed about all aspects of the school's work and are not afraid to ask searching questions to hold you to account for pupils' performance.
- We agreed that the school's plans for improvement are not effective enough. This is because they do not always identify clearly when actions are due to start or who will check that they are being done. It is also not always clear how the actions will be monitored for effectiveness. This risks some actions not occurring, or being allowed to continue even if they are not bringing about the changes needed.
- The leader for English is successfully leading the initiative to improve progress and raise standards in reading, particularly at key stage 2. As a result of careful analysis of pupils' performance, a wide range of actions has been put in place. For example, you have implemented an accelerated reading programme, developed a range of cross-curricular reading activities, introduced 'word of the day' and provided reading workshops for parents. The school's most recent assessment information confirms that most pupils are making good progress with their reading throughout the school.
- A new and more exciting approach to teaching phonics has been introduced in early years and at key stage 1. As a result, the teaching of phonics is improving greatly and pupils are making good progress. For example, in the Reception class, children demonstrated a strong knowledge of the sounds which individual letters represent and successfully blended sounds together as they eagerly chose 'Easter egg' words from the Easter basket. In Year 2, pupils were captivated as they helped the 'naughty fairy' by using their knowledge of a variety of single sounds that are represented by two or three letters. Some pupils in Years 3 and 4, however, have gaps in their phonic knowledge.
- Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through the school's link with Besanti School in West Bengal, India. Pupils have a mature and sensitive understanding of how life for children living in this slum area of Kolkata differs from their own. Regular visits by staff to India keep pupils actively involved with the school. For example, a visit in January 2018 enabled pupils and their families to provide essential resources to be taken to the pupils of Besanti School. This link is successfully broadening pupils' horizons. It is providing them with opportunities to show compassion and kindness and is successfully preparing them for life in modern Britain.

- Pupils enjoy meaningful opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. For example, pupils who are elected to the school council or who act as mini play leaders take their responsibilities seriously. These opportunities contribute strongly to their mature attitudes, high levels of confidence and sense of responsibility.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the effectiveness of the school's improvement plans by including exact timescales for starting actions, criteria against which to measure success, who should check that the actions have been taken and when the checks should be done
- pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have gaps in their phonic knowledge receive precisely tailored support to boost their skills and bring them in line with current age-related expectations.

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

Yours sincerely

Dorothy Bathgate
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the head of school, the leaders for English, four members of the governing body and a group of pupils. I held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and the Derby Diocesan Academy Trust. I visited all classes to see pupils and staff at work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day. I considered the views of 33 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 33 responses parents made using the free-text service. I also considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff. I evaluated a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies.