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Mrs Melanie Smith
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Smith

Short inspection of Ivington CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 July 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 team have fostered a caring, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere in the school. You and your staff provide a caring environment in which pupils' needs and abilities are individually known and met. Your dedication to knowing and understanding every pupil as a unique person is evident. Parents recognise and value your ability to support each pupil and their family, with comments such as: 'A fantastic school that has a strong ethos and values in which children feel safe, happy and make good progress', 'Lovely, individualised support' and 'There has been support for me and my child.'

You know the context of your school population well. You recognise that this context is changing. Your continual reflection on understanding these changes and what they mean for pupils and staff ensures you put appropriate training, teaching and support in place. Mobility is higher than national figures, with many pupils joining the school mid-year. You implement carefully considered support and pastoral care to create a successful transition at whatever point in the year it occurs. This helps pupils to recognise and respect the 'golden rules' so they settle quickly and feel valued and listened to. Parents cherish the positive partnership with staff, commenting on the difference it makes to their child's progress, happiness and confidence. As one parent stated, echoing the views of many: 'Everyone is caring and there to support each other. I would not want my child to be anywhere else.'

Leaders pay careful thought and attention to the curriculum that pupils experience throughout their time at Ivington. Pupils engage well with the topics. Leaders promote strong links between subjects. Pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. They refer to previous learning and use this to place them in a context that helps them make sense of their learning. At the time of inspection, younger pupils had created realistic and detailed models of houses from the time of the Great Fire of London. They were awaiting a visit from the fire service so that they could set their models alight, in a safe and controlled manner, to develop their understanding of why these houses burnt so quickly and fiercely and how this helps us to be safe today.

Leaders live out the deep belief that pupils should encounter an opening of a 'window on the world' through the experiences gained during their time at school. They provide a wide range of trips and visits that support learning across the curriculum, as well as broaden individual life experiences and enrich everyday lives. Pupils who spoke to the inspector were clear in their enjoyment of these opportunities and how they had benefited from them.

You also provide pupils with a chance to take on responsibilities, including being prefects, science ambassadors, digital leaders, Year 5 buddies to Reception children and on the school and eco councils. Pupils enjoy these responsibilities. They spoke of learning from digital leaders about the importance of staying safe online and how the school council had supported a resolution on the use of the playground that took account of the viewpoints of different people.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There are well-defined and clear referral procedures so that all staff, students and volunteers are aware of whom to go to if they are concerned about a child's welfare or safety. Leaders work closely with external agencies, when necessary, to ensure that pupils are protected and families are supported. You escalate matters when you feel that external agencies are not taking your concerns seriously enough. Governors and staff have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders continually revisit safeguarding training, ensuring that they take account of and meet the changing needs of pupils and families.

Pupils say: 'Bullying is rare in this school. Teachers help us to use kind hands and kind feet.' Pupils confidently explain the difference between unkind behaviour and bullying. They know the sanctions and rewards of the behaviour policy and understand how these help them to work and learn together. All parents who responded to the survey said their child is happy, safe and well looked after.

You, alongside governors, have a strategic oversight of safeguarding. A recent review has led you to create the role of a family support worker. You both work closely together to strengthen further safeguarding for all pupils, especially around the monitoring and improving of attendance. However, there remains further work to do to reduce persistent absence, thus improving attendance.

Inspection findings

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have provided a range of training and practice that have helped teachers to develop effective strategies, which they use to intervene swiftly and extend the challenge they provide to pupils. As a result, all pupils are making good progress. Key stage 2 outcomes in 2018 were strong, with 89% of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This is significantly above national figures.
- Leaders have skilfully moulded purposeful and relevant opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum. As in all that you do, great care and attention to detail has gone into identifying the most appropriate activity for the skill and knowledge being developed. As a result, pupils see the purpose and value of writing and mathematics and demonstrate high levels of thinking and reasoning across all subjects. However, there is room for further improvement. Teachers are skilled at posing targeted feedback comments, in line with the school's policy, that provide opportunities for higher-order thinking, reasoning and explanations, yet pupils do not consistently complete these tasks and so miss out on potential challenge and deepening of learning.
- An area for improvement at the previous inspection was the development of the outdoor area in the early years. You have prioritised this and continue to do so. Leaders took on responsibility for the pre-school provision for two- to four-year-olds in January 2016. You have constructed separate outdoor areas for the pre-school and the Reception class, and these provide a range of opportunities for children to improve their skills. You work hard to overcome the limitations of the physical area, with cleverly designed spaces and features which promote all areas of the early years curriculum. Thus, children can follow their interests outside, as well as engage in planned provision. Adults also promote children's development of their gross motor skills using the outdoor playing field and large climbing equipment.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the early years. Children are happy, confident learners. During a learning walk in pre-school, conducted jointly with you, I saw children engaged in a range of activities. Children were focused, and one very young child was totally immersed in independently and repeatedly pouring and filling a range of containers at the water tray. Adults were interacting with children across a range of activities, with several children responding positively to reading and obeying road signs as they navigated their bikes around a marked-out space.
- Adults in the Reception class balance children's interests with a taught-topic focus. Adults carefully plan for focus activities alongside opportunities to apply taught skills in activities that children choose for themselves. The emphasis that leaders have given to refining adults' questioning skills is improving children's ability to reason, justify and explain. Consequently, the number of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is improving, as is the number of children who are exceeding expectations in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Phonics is taught well. In 2018, a very large majority of pupils met the phonics standard expected in Year 1. Teachers give pupils books which match the sounds they have been taught as they learn to read. This helps them to read accurately and with growing confidence and fluency. Pupils take other books home, as well as library books, which parents can share with their child. Older pupils talk about the different authors and genres that they enjoy reading and can explain the reasons for their preferences.
- Governors have continued to develop and increase their skills and confidence since the previous inspection. You have established a fitting training programme that hones particular areas that are less well developed, such as understanding data. As a result, governors are ever-more knowledgeable and use this to fulfil their strategic role capably. They offer you a high degree of support and challenge. A recent development has involved middle leaders, alongside governors, in monitoring during learning walks and work scrutinies. This has broadened and deepened the evidence that governors use to base questions on and has strengthened the way they double-check the information that they are given. Middle leaders undertaking monitoring in this way is in its infancy, and there is scope further to influence and improve pupils' outcomes in their subject area.

Leaders use their detailed knowledge of the barriers to learning faced by some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at the school to ensure that additional funding is well spent. Leaders provide sensitive and individualised support for these pupils' academic and personal development. Work in books shows that these pupils make similar progress across the curriculum to other pupils nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the role of the family support worker is further developed so that the increasingly complex needs of families are met, to improve attendance
- they consolidate the role of middle leaders so that they can further enhance the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in the subjects they lead
- in line with the school policy, teachers insist that pupils address and respond to feedback consistently.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Foulkes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with yourself and the deputy headteacher, the administrator and middle leaders and a group of governors. I held telephone conversations with the school improvement adviser and a representative of the local authority. I observed pupils around the school and in their classes. I undertook joint learning walks with yourself and looked at books. I also met with six pupils to seek their views of the school. I met parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the 16 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 16 free text responses and the 12 responses to the staff survey. I reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan, several school-policy documents and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I also checked the school's website.