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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Lindsey Kalirai
Headteacher
Aston-on-Trent Primary School
Long Croft
Derby
DE72 2UH

Dear Mrs Kalirai

Short inspection of Aston-on-Trent Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 March 2016, 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 October 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your staff are very positive, and say that they work well together for the benefit of all pupils. They were keen to tell me how you take note of their ideas and views, and use these when you and governors review plans and policies. All of those who were in post at the time of the inspection believe strongly that the school has continued to improve. Staff know the pupils and their families well and are aware of what more needs to be done to improve teaching, so that outcomes become even better than they are.

Pupils also say that their voice is valued. On the day of my visit, work had started on the new 'trim trail' on the school grounds, which pupils had asked for and had helped to plan. Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn and they wear their uniform proudly. They look after the building and do not drop litter. Pupils are polite to visitors and each other, work and play happily together and cooperate well in class. During my visit, I saw no instances whatsoever of misbehaviour or silliness. Pupils display good attitudes to learning and complete their work neatly.

The governing body challenges you vigorously to continue to improve. Governors are ambitious for the school and, as one governor explained to me, want to 'move it from good to great'. They ask searching questions about pupils' outcomes and ensure that teachers' appraisal is closely linked to their classroom performance.

You give detailed and accurate reasons as to why your school is good, and also why it is not yet better than this. This is because teaching, while improving, is not yet outstanding. As a result, pupils' progress is not rapid and sustained across the

school. You also know that you need to increase the proportion of pupils who make more than the progress expected of them. You, staff and the governors have written a three-year strategy for further development, and a more detailed, one-year action plan. This is having a good impact on improving outcomes.

Your pupils make good progress across the school. The proportions that leave the early years with a good level of development are slightly higher than the national average. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is significantly higher than the national average. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stages of their education. Information you provided to me about outcomes for this year show that pupils' good progress is continuing. High proportions are on track to achieve at least at the standards expected for their age, and a considerable number beyond these. Disadvantaged pupils also achieve well, with many achieving beyond other pupils nationally.

During my visit, I looked at a large number of pupils' exercise books in all year groups. These confirm convincingly that pupils' progress is good from an early age. For example, pupils in Year 2 have moved quickly from learning about place value in mathematics to understanding how to subtract numbers that are more complicated. In their writing, pupils are learning to write confidently and accurately. Their skills in creative language are impressive. For example, a Year 1 pupil had written, 'the mad goat head-butted the tree and the tangerines fell into the basket'.

While the most-able pupils make good progress, their improvement over time is not yet rapid. As a result, they do not reach the highest standards by the time they leave the school. This is because the most-able pupils do not consistently receive work that really makes them think deeply. A considerable amount of the work that I looked at during my visit did not challenge them as much as it could. You are aware that the most-able pupils could be achieving more than the progress expected of them. Teachers have begun to address this by teaching the most-able pupils to develop a deeper understanding of mathematics.

You have dealt well overall with the areas for improvement that inspectors identified at the last inspection. Teachers identify any groups who are falling behind and give them effective support to catch up. Pupils I spoke with told me in detail how staff help them understand something if they find their work difficult. Adults also help pupils to develop their understanding of the different global communities and faiths. As a result, pupils become respectful of others and develop a good understanding of fundamental British values. Those pupils I met were very keen to tell me that it is a good thing that the people of the world are all different, and they enjoy finding out about them.

You have also improved the ways in which you communicate with parents since the last inspection. The school's website and your newsletters give helpful levels of detail, but you are keen to improve communication further. A survey you undertook in July 2015 showed that more than nine in ten parents who responded were happy with the level of information staff provided about their child's progress. However, results from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, show that satisfaction has now declined sharply because levels of attainment have been abolished nationally, and many parents are no longer sure how well their child is doing in relation to others of the same age. You have plans to address this shortly through, for example, your

forthcoming parents evening. You know that it is very important that all parents have clear information about their child's progress. A minority of parents also expressed dissatisfaction at the school's leadership. Most of these views were regarding staff not ensuring that the most-able pupils made as much progress as they could.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are determined, above all, to keep pupils safe. Staff are extremely clear that they must report any concerns they have, and are well aware of the procedure to do this. You have ensured that they have all been trained, including in areas of recent national concern, such as radicalisation and child exploitation. As a result, they know the warning signs of potential abuse.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The designated governor for this area conducts an annual audit with you to check procedures for protecting pupils in school. During my visit, I looked at a sample of case files regarding vulnerable pupils. These show that you keep good records of any concerns, and that you are not afraid to contact external agencies, including social care, where this is necessary.

A small minority of parents who responded to Parent View said that they did not feel that staff manage bullying effectively. However, I spoke with a large number of pupils across different ages during my visit. They said that bullying, and name calling, were very rare, and were insistent that adults always dealt with it quickly and effectively. They told me that they felt very safe in school and were well looked after. They described to me how adults talk to them about a range of risks, and how to protect themselves against these, including from texting and with regard to e-safety. They know they you should not give your personal details online, and what to do if they receive a message or image that worries them.

Inspection findings

- The leadership of the school is effective. You and governors have judged the school accurately and have written a school development plan together that is continuing to improve outcomes. Middle leaders support you in helping staff to develop their teaching and they inform the governors of the impact of the actions that are taking place. Governors are clear that the school needs to improve further so that it is outstanding.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress from their arrival in the early years. Children quickly become confident and learn well in all areas. Throughout the school, staff give those pupils who are falling behind, or who find aspects of their work difficult, effective support that helps them to understand and move on. Relationships between adults and pupils are respectful. Staff expect pupils to work hard, follow instructions and complete the work they are given with care.
- In 2015, the proportions making expected progress in mathematics were at least in line with those found nationally and above in reading and writing. The proportions making more than this were broadly in line with the national averages in writing and mathematics, but below the national average in

reading. The current information you provided, and pupils' work examined during the inspection, shows that progress remains good. Pupils leave the school with higher attainment than the national average.

- You spend the pupil premium money effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress, with most leaving the school last year with attainment above other pupils nationally. However, the progress of the most-able pupils is not as fast as it could be. Teachers do not consistently give work that challenges them sufficiently. As a result, not enough reach the highest standards by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They know that it is important to work hard and to do their best. They also behave well around the school. They begin and end lessons calmly and line up in an orderly fashion. Pupils enjoy coming to school each day, and rarely miss a day in school. Attendance has been above the national average for the past three years, and continues to be so.
- Pupils learn about different religions, for example, visiting a Sikh gurdwara, a Hindu mandir and an Islamic mosque, to see other faiths at first hand. Pupils also meet other communities and schools, for example by taking part in many different tournaments in Derby. The school's 'Global Village' week teaches pupils how people across the world lead different lives. As a result, they become well-informed, reflective young people who respect others. Pupils behave well, follow the school's rules, value their opportunity to contribute to decisions made in school and uphold the fundamental values of modern Britain.
- Parents I met at the end of the day were unanimously positive about the school. They believe that teaching is good, their children are looked after well, and that they make good progress as a result. A large majority of those who expressed views via Parent View were also positive about most aspects of the school and indicated that they would recommend it to others. However, a considerable number of parents expressed reservations regarding certain aspects of the school. In particular, they said that leaders did not ensure that staff give them sufficient information about their child's progress, and that they believed that pupils could be making faster progress than they currently are.
- A small minority of parents who responded to Parent View also believe that staff do not deal with bullying effectively. However, all of the pupils I met during my visit were very keen to impress on me that they felt very safe in school. They told me that bullying and name calling were very rare indeed, and adults address it quickly and properly when it happens. They particularly liked how some of their classmates had become new 'ambassadors' for anti-bullying, and that any pupils who were unkind had to fill in 'time to think' sheets. These prompted those pupils to understand what they had done, and why it was wrong. A new anti-bullying policy, which parents and pupils have helped to write, has been introduced. Since this point, the number of incidents of bullying, and poor behaviour, has declined and is at low levels. However, staff are not complacent and want to see this reduce still further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the most-able pupils make rapid progress by giving them work that consistently challenges them
- parents are provided regularly with good information about their children's progress in meeting and exceeding the standards typically expected for their ages.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, a member of the senior leadership team, representatives of the governing body and the leader of the early years. We visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' work across the school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with groups of them at breaktime and lunchtime. I considered the views of 44 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, alongside the school's most recent questionnaire. I also met with parents at the end of the day. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan and information on outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I met staff and discussed with them their opinions of the school and its leadership. I studied information related to attendance, anonymised examples of teachers' appraisal and examined safeguarding records and policies.