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Miss Debbie Bateman  
Headteacher  
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High Street  
Studley  
Warwickshire  
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Dear Miss Bateman

### **Short inspection of Studley Community Infants' School**

Following my visit to the school on 29 March 2017, 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 May 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Along with other school leaders, you have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There have been many changes at the school over the last few years. You have restructured your leadership team and there have been several changes to the teaching staff. Despite the challenges that such changes bring, you and your leadership team have the trust of both staff and parents. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Studley Community Infants' School. They all agree that the school is well led and managed and that the school has a culture that is aspirational for all pupils. Parents comment positively about the school's work and a great majority say that they would recommend the school to others. As one parent said, 'This school is a champion at ensuring that children are cared for and loved,' and a number of parents recognise the quality of support that the school provides for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teachers work hard to engage pupils in their learning, planning interesting lessons and giving pupils regular opportunities to discuss and share their work with their peers. For example, in the Nursery class, I observed children gently handling the young chicks that they are watching develop, observing carefully and asking their own questions. In a Reception class, children listened respectfully to each other as they worked in small groups to discuss how to build houses linked to the story of the Three Little Pigs.

The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they feel safe because they trust the adults in school to help them if they have a problem. Pupils learn about diversity and they speak positively about the different religions and cultures that they find out about in lessons. Pupils also speak positively about the recognition that they receive for good behaviour, saying that they are proud when they are nominated for an award by their teacher. As they progress through the school, pupils grow in confidence and develop the skills that they need to move on to the next stage of their education.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to accelerate pupils' progress in writing and to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. Progress in writing can be clearly seen in pupils' work across the school and it is now more closely in line with outcomes in reading and mathematics. You and your leadership team identify the handwriting programme in use across the school as being a key factor in improving the presentation of pupils' work and making it easier for pupils to write at greater length. This, along with increased opportunities to write across a variety of subjects, has had a positive impact for all pupils.

Staff changes mean that you have not been able to develop the quality of teaching as much as you would have liked to have done. However, teaching over time and across the school remains good. Regular staff training and the opportunity to share effective practice in school, and increasingly with other schools, is helping to support the quality of teaching. You have plans to strengthen this further by developing the curriculum so that teachers will encourage the pupils to research, investigate and solve problems.

Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check remain stubbornly below the national average. You have created extra teaching groups to provide pupils with more targeted support and you carefully track the progress of all pupils, providing additional interventions to those pupils who require them. However, despite your best efforts, you recognise that more needs to be done and you and your senior leaders are actively considering introducing a new whole-school approach.

You recognise the important difference that positive parental engagement can make to pupils' progress and you are looking at ways in which this can be improved. For example, parents of children in the early years are encouraged to follow, and contribute to, their child's progress via an online learning journal and you have recently held workshops for parents to help them understand the development of phonics skills. You are particularly keen to increase the number of parents who regularly read with their children at home and this is an area for further development.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. As a result, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for at all times. Pupils are taught to stay safe through the curriculum,

particularly in relation to bullying, where pupils are taught the slogan 'talk, walk, tell', and keeping safe online, where pupils are encouraged to 'think before you click'.

All staff have regular and appropriate training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns. You and your senior leaders work with external agencies as necessary and are persistent when concerned about a pupil's welfare. Governors understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and regularly monitor whether school procedures are being followed.

## **Inspection findings**

- Since the last inspection, pupils' attendance has improved and in 2016 attendance rates were above the national average. These high levels of attendance are being maintained. The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school has reduced and remains below the national average. The actions you take, such as letters to parents highlighting concerns, but also recognising improved attendance, are making a positive difference. The procedures you and your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence, undertaking home visits and working with the local authority, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years foundation stage has steadily improved and in 2016 it was very close to the national average. While good provision within the school's nursery means that children are 'school ready', almost half the children entering the Reception Year have not had the positive experiences your Nursery provides. You have recognised the importance of having greater consistency in provision across the pre-school settings in the local area and you are working with your local children's centre to develop this. When pupils arrive in school with physical, personal, social and emotional development that is well below what is typical for their age, you support them well by adapting the classroom environment and the curriculum. You also actively engage a range of external agencies to provide additional input.
- Four years ago, you and your leadership team identified that a significant minority of pupils were unable to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because of specific social and emotional needs. As a result, you set up a nurture group to develop pupils' self-confidence and readiness to learn. This provision is successful in helping the pupils to develop the skills that they need to cope in the classroom. The provision is only used by younger pupils because by Year 2 the pupils have developed sufficient resilience and no longer require the support.
- Following the introduction of the new national curriculum, you rightly focused on ensuring that teaching was adapted to meet the higher standards required in English and mathematics. Linked to this, you introduced a new assessment system in order to track pupils' progress accurately. This system is now becoming embedded as you and your teachers build up greater expertise and knowledge of

the standards. You currently check the accuracy of your assessments within school. You are also introducing more opportunities for teachers to work with schools across the local area to compare samples of pupils' work. Assessments are completed termly and each teacher writes a progress review for their class. You use these to identify strengths and areas for improvement across the school as well as to inform future planning. While the curriculum you provide is broad and balanced, you now want to enhance it and you are going to be involved in a regional project to develop pupils' skills through the curriculum.

- You track the progress of disadvantaged pupils on an individual basis and work with the special educational needs coordinator and class teachers to address any specific barriers to learning. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils, for example access to the nurture group and small group interventions. However, you and the governors recognise that disadvantaged pupils do not always achieve as well as other pupils in school and, as a result, you want to see if the funding could be used even more effectively. To address this, an external review of pupil premium spending is planned for the summer term.
- Pupils enjoy reading and by the end of key stage 1 many are reading with fluency and comprehension. Pupils talk confidently about the books and authors that they like to read. Any pupil not on track to reach the standards expected for their age is given individual support. Books read in school during group reading sessions are more challenging than those pupils take home to read independently. This is a strategy aimed at increasing pupils' self-confidence. However, parents and pupils are not aware of this strategy and sometimes feel that the books pupils take home are not sufficiently challenging.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in phonics improve so that they are at least in line with national outcomes
- the curriculum is further developed so that it is of interest to pupils and develops their sense of curiosity and independence
- parents are more actively involved in their children's learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team. I visited all classes where I observed teaching and learning and I spoke to pupils about their work. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils both formally and informally. I listened to some pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy reading. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, the school development plan, incident logs and documents relating to safeguarding. I met with four governors. I took account of the 50 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 31 comments received electronically. I also took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.