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Mrs Karen Clark
Headteacher
Pear Tree Infant School
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Dear Mrs Clark

Short inspection of Pear Tree Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is very well led and managed. You are ably supported by an effective leadership team and governing body. Leaders are aspirational for pupils and committed to the continued improvement of the school. You have clear plans for school improvement that are determined by accurate evaluation of the strengths and areas for development for the school. You share your plans with staff and governors. Members of the leadership team are working cohesively together to raise pupils' attainment.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Every parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend Pear Tree Infant School. The vast majority of parents agree that the school is well led and managed and they strongly agree that their children are taught well. Their confidence in the school is evident. Parents whom I met described the school as 'brilliant' and 'very caring'. They stated that they 'absolutely love the school'. In addition, they feel that communication is a strength and that the staff listen to and act on their concerns. Parents feel that their children are encouraged to do well and given work that is challenging. A number of parents told me how the school does a good job of meeting the individual needs of their child and, as a result, they feel their children make very good progress. This includes parents of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have built good relationships with parents and they value the support you give to them and to their children. They find the

parent workshops informative and helpful. As a result, parents feel more able to support their child's learning at home.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and know that it is important to attend school every day. Parents are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of good attendance. Subsequently, pupils' attendance is improving. The reward systems that the school has put in place to encourage good attendance are having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school. Pupils are also motivated to come to school because they enjoy their learning. Pupils whom I met spoke to me about how they have enjoyed learning what a fair test is in their science work. They spoke with enthusiasm about their work on different species in their topic on living things. Pupils know that their teachers are there to help them with their learning. However, pupils said that, 'Teachers make us think hard. They give us clues but they don't tell us the answer.'

At the last inspection, inspectors asked you to closely monitor pupils' learning in lessons and how well teachers intervene to move learning forward. You and other leaders in your school are determined that the difficulties that many of your pupils face will not become barriers to learning. Consequently, you have put very thorough monitoring systems in place. Pupils have precise and specific targets, focused on their needs. Leaders constantly check the progress pupils are making, especially for those who find learning more difficult. You check the impact of additional support for all pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and, as a result, teachers take swift and effective action to change their plans to match pupils' individual needs. However, while pupils make very good rates of progress, many do not reach the expected standard by the end of key stage 1. You have recognised this and your leadership team is constantly reviewing the impact of teaching and learning to further raise standards.

You recognised that the teaching of phonics needed to improve. Phonics teaching ensures that pupils learn to read and spell new words well. You also identified that pupils' understanding of reading needed to improve. The majority of pupils do not attend an early years setting and therefore enter your school with no knowledge of letters and the sounds they make. To ensure that pupils reach a good standard in phonics, you adapted your phonics scheme to better meet the needs of your pupils. In addition, you have increased the additional support for those pupils who are not on track to meet the expected standard by the end of Year 1. Your work has been successful and the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2 is similar to the national average. Thus, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Your assessment procedures are rigorous and teachers make effective use of daily assessments to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs. They use this information to adapt their planning and move learning forward. As a result, pupils make very good progress, including in the early years. However, teachers are a little too cautious in their assessments at the end of each key stage. This is especially the case at the end of Reception. This is confirmed by work in pupils' books and external moderation. While you and your staff have high standards and

expectations of pupils' achievement, you understand that assessments at the end of each key stage need to be as accurate as possible. This is because the next teacher needs precise information to move learning on as quickly as possible.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a strong culture of safeguarding in your school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff and governors have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and concerns. As a result, staff are vigilant and act swiftly on any concerns they may have. All staff understand their individual responsibility to report concerns to the school's safeguarding leads. Furthermore, they know to report concerns directly to the local authority, or to the police, as appropriate. You work well with outside agencies and are aware of your responsibility to follow up and escalate concerns if necessary.

Pupils know how to stay safe and they say they feel safe in school. Parents agree. Pupils explained to me why it is important to follow adults' instructions, for example when the school fire alarm is sounded. Pupils told me that incidents of bullying are rare and they are confident that they could talk to staff if they experience any problems.

Inspection findings

- The early years setting is a bright and stimulating environment for pupils to learn. The adults work well as a team and the early years leader is very knowledgeable about the individual needs of the children. She ensures that children have accurate targets that are sharply focused on what they need to do next. Targets are informed by assessment and updated frequently. Information on children's next steps is displayed on the wall. This enables adults to provide appropriate support and interventions to move learning on rapidly.
- All staff have a consistent approach to teaching phonics. I observed phonics being taught to pupils in Years 1 and 2. I heard pupils correctly using the techniques which the school had taught them to sound out difficult or unfamiliar words. I also observed pupils using their phonic skills to blend and spell words when writing. Your English leader explained how she monitors the effectiveness of teaching and learning regularly. She subsequently delivers training through 'master classes' and staff meetings in response to her evaluations of the impact of phonics teaching on pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils who find learning difficult and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported. Your special educational needs coordinator has an excellent understanding of the needs of the pupils in your school. She works well with parents and they value her support. We looked at the detailed plans that pupils are given to help them make good progress and catch up. Daily assessment is used well to identify small and achievable steps to success. Staff work tirelessly to monitor and evaluate the impact of additional support for these pupils. However, you recognise that more pupils need to

achieve the expected standard by the time they leave key stage 1.

- Levels of attendance have been below the national average for some time. You and your governing body recognise that this is still an area for development. However, there has been an improvement this year and this is because of the work you are doing to engage parents. The parents whom I spoke with were clear that the school would follow up on pupil absence with phone calls, letters and meetings. The governing body has appointed an attendance officer and you work closely with the local authority educational welfare officer. The strategies you have put in place to reward good attendance are proving effective.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the final assessments that teachers make, at the end of each stage of pupils' education, are as accurate as possible
- more pupils, including the least able pupils, achieve the expected standard at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics
- the number of pupils with high rates of absence is reduced, so that pupils are not disadvantaged by poor attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Richardson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the majority of your staff. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and I met with a group of pupils. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also spoke with your local authority school improvement officer. We visited classrooms together and we looked at a range of pupils' work from key stage 1 and the early years. I looked at the performance information for the current pupils and we discussed the progress that different groups of pupils had made.

In addition, I considered evidence from a range of documentation, including the school's plans for improvement, records of attendance and keeping children safe. I checked the school's single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff) to ensure it met current safeguarding regulations.