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Mr Gary Soars
Headteacher
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Uplands Park Road
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Dear Mr Soars

Short inspection of Edward Francis Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 September 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. The leadership team has ensured that the quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve. Pupils develop both academically and socially in a safe, nurturing environment. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. This is evident in the many positive comments written in Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Parents noted the 'excellent teaching' and the 'hard-working, caring staff'.

Determined leaders, including governors, have worked extremely hard to improve the school's provision for its pupils. Parents also recognise the commitment of leaders and staff in making Edward Francis an enjoyable place in which to learn. Parents commented on the 'well-managed school' and the fact that 'teachers and senior managers are always around to deal with concerns big or small swiftly and supportively'. You provide a clear plan to support both staff and pupils to develop key learning skills such as resilience and preparation which are reinforced through daily assemblies and in the classroom.

Governance is strong. The governing body is well led and offers critical challenge and support where required. Governors share your ambition for the academic and social success of each pupil. Their regular visits to the school provide valuable information with which they are able to hold you and your leadership team effectively to account, alongside commending you for your successes.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are respectful of each other and adults. This results in a harmonious learning environment throughout the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the topics they study. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and pupils respond appropriately. You have ensured that pupils have access to a broad and rich curriculum through which they can learn a range of skills and new knowledge and understanding. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about democracy and freedom of speech. As a consequence, very many pupils are developing into confident, articulate members of the community.

As leaders, you have correctly judged the teaching of mathematics to be a strength of the school. Strong leadership in mathematics has ensured that pupils both enjoy and achieve well in mathematics. Lessons are structured effectively across the key stages to ensure that pupils develop and extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers provide engaging resources and challenging lessons that are tailored to the needs and interests of pupils. They give clear guidance to pupils so they continue to make good progress and achieve well.

You and your leaders take decisive action where you consider improvements are required. For example, as a result of your work in improving the use of the Reception indoor and outdoor learning environment, the percentage of children making a good level of development has continued to improve each year.

You recognise that there are still areas in which the school needs to strengthen and develop further. For example, you agreed that pupils' achievements in writing require further improvement. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write extended pieces in other curriculum subjects. Teachers do not routinely provide precise enough guidance to help pupils improve their writing further.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils told me how safe they felt at Edward Francis Primary School. They explained how adults were always on hand to listen to them if they needed support. Parents also commented on the strong pastoral support at the school. One parent stated that 'pupils were made to feel valued, respected and cared for'. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe when on the internet and know what to do to keep safe.

Pupils can define bullying and told me categorically that it did not happen very often at the school and that staff resolved issues very quickly when they arose. School records confirm this to be the case.

Leaders, including governors, are vigilant about safeguarding at the school. They ensure that all records and checks on staff who work at the school are compliant with statutory requirements and maintained securely. Inspection evidence demonstrates that safeguarding leads are tenacious in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are given the support and protection they require.

Adults who work at the school receive regular safeguarding training. They are alert to their responsibilities and know what to do if they have concerns about the well-being

of a pupil. The reporting systems in place ensure timely and appropriate support for pupils.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my lines of enquiry was about pupils, including progress in writing for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Although most pupils made progress in line with other pupils nationally, many did not make rapid progress in 2016. However, you and your leadership team have focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning of writing across both key stages. As a consequence, pupils' handwriting is neat and presentable. Most pupils in Year 1, for example, are able to write letters and words very well. Additionally, the English lead introduced an approach to the teaching of spelling which has had immediate impact. Pupils' spelling outcomes at key stage 2 exceeded national outcomes in 2016.
- You have introduced a clear approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Your leadership structure affords an overview of year groups alongside specific subject areas. As a consequence, leaders are very well informed about the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' attainment and progress in writing. Regular training alongside moderation of assessments, both internally and externally with partner schools, have supported the development of your staff. However, you acknowledge that you need to continue to develop pupils' opportunities to write extensively in other areas of the curriculum. Also, you are continuing to focus on improving the impact of teachers' assessment and guidance on improving pupils' writing.
- My second line of enquiry was about how leaders are ensuring that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. You and your leadership team continually review the quality of the curriculum at all key stages. As a result, pupils study a range of interesting subjects such as science, history, geography and physical education. The school's thematic approach also fosters many links between specific subject areas which the pupils enjoy. For example, pupils in Year 5 study the text, 'The amazing story of Adolphus Tips' in English alongside broadening their understanding of the history of the Second World War. I observed Year 5 pupils asking extremely perceptive questions about the emotional and social impact of the war on child evacuees in Britain.
- You also offer a rich variety of after-school clubs which are attended by many pupils. For example, pupils can study computer coding, dance and sport. Many pupils told me how much they valued these opportunities. Additionally, pupils told me how much they appreciated the rich programme of external visitors and trips which strengthen their understanding of what they have learned in the classroom. For example, Year 3 pupils attended a Stone Age re-enactment day which taught them how to make fire and live as they did in the Stone Age.
- To ensure the high quality of teaching across the curriculum, subject leaders monitor and support teaching in all areas. Inspection evidence such as lesson observations and documentation from your monitoring demonstrates that pupils receive a rich, well-taught curriculum.

- I also sought to establish how well the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieve across the curriculum. You ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils receive additional, tailored support to enable them to reach their potential. The most able pupils receive additional challenge in mathematics, reading and other areas of the curriculum.
- I observed lessons where pupils chose the mathematics questions they wanted to answer. Many pupils chose challenging questions but through paired discussions, well-chosen resources and careful guidance from the teachers and teaching assistants, pupils made considerable progress in their understanding. Many of the most able pupils told me that mathematics was their favourite subject. You have ensured that teachers provide topics suitable to the needs of all pupils, including the most able pupils.
- My final line of enquiry was about how well pupils are prepared to keep themselves safe. Pupils' conduct in class and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are kind, helpful and courteous. The curriculum helps pupils to keep safe in the world beyond school. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of the internet through lessons and external visitors such as the police.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum in subjects other than English
- teachers provide more precise guidance to pupils about how to improve their writing in line with school policy.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the course of this inspection I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders and two governors.

I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school site. I also met formally with a group of 14 pupils.

I visited a range of classes across Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2.

I undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders.

Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.

A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; documents relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; minutes of governors meetings; and curriculum plans.

I considered the views of 124 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 119 views which parents expressed via the free-text service.

I analysed 23 staff views expressed via the staff questionnaire as well as 47 pupil views.