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Mrs Claire Arnold
Headteacher
The Elton CofE Primary School of the Foundation of Frances and Jane Proby
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Dear Mrs Arnold

Short inspection of The Elton CofE Primary School of the Foundation of Frances and Jane Proby

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Since you became the headteacher in September 2016, you have created an impressive culture where the strengths of pupils and staff are nurtured and celebrated. The school's motto of 'Expect, endeavour, exceed' is evident throughout the school. You have worked successfully to establish a cohesive staff team with a shared commitment to achieving the very best for all pupils. There is a high degree of effective teamwork to strengthen teaching and learning and staff strongly endorse your leadership. This ensures that pupils make good progress and the school continues to move forward.

The school is a vibrant, happy place where pupils display great enthusiasm for learning and are keen to share their achievements. They are rightly proud of the good progress that they are making and are eager to discuss it. Pupils told me that their teachers 'do everything they can to make us happy, learn and have fun'. Pupils understand and value the many ways staff build their confidence, develop their resilience, encourage their curiosity and help them to strive for success. You have been unwavering in your commitment to ensure that all staff prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.

Parents are very positive about the standard of education their children receive and 100% would recommend the school to another parent. They particularly appreciate the hard work of staff who 'go beyond the day job' and the excellent start their children have to their education. Typical comments from parents include: 'The school has strong values and wonderful staff. My children are happy, settled and being educated in a safe and caring environment' and 'as a parent I am kept fully informed of developments within the school. The teachers are all approachable and my children look forward to going to school each morning.'

Governors, several of whom have children currently at the school, support you well. They are increasingly involved in checking the work of the school and creating plans for future improvements. They ensure that they have a breadth of knowledge and skills to conduct their responsibilities effectively. Governors speak with pride about the school and share your enthusiasm and desire to raise standards further.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to focus on raising pupils' achievement in mathematics. You have attended to this area by providing training for staff and strengthening the curriculum. During the inspection, I observed effective teaching in mathematics across the school. In the Reception class, children were excitedly counting the spots on dominoes to put them in the correct place on a number line and busy making number Christmas trees. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, pupils were being encouraged to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve a range of problems and challenges. As a result of your work in this area, pupils now make strong progress and consequently, achievement in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is above the national average.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and your improvement plans are well judged, with clear strategies to move the school forward. You make good use of the support and challenge from the school's improvement adviser. You are rightly developing the role of your subject specialists so that they have the capacity to monitor and evaluate the progress of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in their subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and governors have ensured that the arrangements to safeguard pupils are fit for purpose. Safeguarding records are detailed and of high quality. All required checks take place when new staff are appointed. Staff are well trained. They receive updates to their training and have regular opportunities to discuss any safeguarding issues.

Safeguarding policies are appropriate and up to date. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding undertakes checks to ensure that safeguarding procedures are consistently applied. You work closely with other professionals and services to ensure that children and families receive timely and effective support.

Pupils are confident that school is a safe place and told me that they can speak with any member of staff if they have worries. They told me that bullying does not

happen because 'everybody is friendly and we look out for each other'. Parents also feel reassured that their children are safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- This inspection focused on the lines of enquiry agreed at our first meeting. One line of enquiry I explored was the quality of teaching in key stage 1, and the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because published assessment information for the past two years shows that, compared to national averages, pupils in key stage 1 achieved less well in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils in key stage 2.
- Raising the achievement of pupils in key stage 1 is already a priority in your improvement plans. You have provided training for staff and monitor the teaching in lessons closely to make sure that pupils are making strong progress.
- Teachers' good understanding of what pupils in key stage 1 know and can do ensures that teachers plan work that is suited well to pupils' different ages, needs and abilities. Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers plan interesting and engaging activities for them. Teaching assistants are deployed well by the school. They provide effective support for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- You ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on teachers' comments and to identify what they need to do to make better progress. This enables pupils to be clear about how to achieve further success. The quality and quantity of work in pupils' books, displays around the school and the school's assessment information indicate that the teaching in key stage 1 is typically effective over time. Pupils are happy, confident and achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- I also checked how well you and your leaders ensure that the needs of the most able pupils are being met, so that they make rapid progress and attain well. This is because published assessment information shows that at the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Ensuring that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged across the school was also an area for improvement at the previous inspection.
- The work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information show that the most able pupils across the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. During the inspection, I observed that the most able pupils are provided with a range of tasks in their lessons that make them apply their skills in different ways and think more deeply. A group of most-able pupils told me, 'We enjoy being stretched and challenged and we try our best at everything.'
- Finally, I considered how leaders make sure that pupils have access to a broad and relevant curriculum that prepares them well for the next stage of their education. I also wanted to explore how well pupils make progress across subjects other than English and mathematics.
- You are determined that the curriculum at The Elton CofE Primary School is full of

memorable experiences for the pupils. You have recently redesigned the way the curriculum is taught to ensure that pupils have access to a broad range of experiences and that skills are effectively taught in all subjects. Subjects other than English and mathematics are now taught across classes by those teachers who have particular specialisms or interests in these different subjects, for example in science, computing, music and art.

- During the inspection, I looked at teachers' plans and pupils' work in books. It is clear that pupils enjoy a rich and exciting curriculum with lots of interesting and engaging opportunities for learning. During the inspection, I observed a Year 2 religious education (RE) lesson where pupils were reflecting on how they could 'bring light into the world'. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils were investigating how and why condensation occurs and in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were applying the school's values to a discussion on refugees settling in this country. Older pupils told me enthusiastically about their residential trip to France and their visit to London dressed as evacuees, which 'helped us to be independent so we can do well in life'.
- You are currently monitoring this new chosen approach to ensure that it is effective and that pupils make strong progress across all subjects. You acknowledge that the systems for assessing and recording the progress of pupils in all subjects are not yet firmly embedded. Consequently, your subject specialists are not yet able to identify clearly where pupils' progress is strong and where it could be better. Therefore, subject specialists are not yet taking enough responsibility for securing improvements in their subjects as rigorously as they could be. You have already included in your improvement plans that subject specialists need to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and outcomes accurately across all subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop systems for tracking pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics so these can be effectively used by subject specialists to identify where pupils make best progress and where this needs to be better
- subject specialists evaluate the quality of teaching in their subjects and take greater responsibility for creating and implementing further plans for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- You and I discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' progress and attainment.
- Meetings were held with you and your governors, including the chair of governors. I also spoke to the school's improvement adviser on the telephone.
- I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included joint observations of teaching and learning in all classes with you.
- We looked at a sample of pupils' current work across all subjects and across a wide range of abilities.
- I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning, and met more formally with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and case studies about referrals made to external agencies. A discussion was held with you as one of the school's designated safeguarding leads.
- The views of 50 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, as well as the 49 responses parents made using the free-text service. I also considered the views of parents who sent me emails during the inspection.
- I looked at the 11 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 58 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.