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Mrs Sarah Core
Headteacher
Herbert Strutt Primary School
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Dear Mrs Core

Short inspection of Herbert Strutt Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 2018, 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

For example, you have strengthened the quality of teaching by introducing a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. This is effective in providing pupils with frequent opportunities to review and reflect on their learning and to learn from their mistakes. Pupils across the school are increasingly confident in exploring new ideas in mathematics and recording their reasoning in their workbooks.

You have been proactive in tackling the other actions from the last inspection. You have developed the role of middle and subject leaders, ensuring that they are closely involved in the regular programme to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff with whom I met were able to give a clear and confident overview of their roles and to evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' learning and progress. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have strengthened their roles by establishing effective links with subject leaders. Governors and staff work seamlessly together to prioritise the key actions for school improvement.

Your association with the Belper Cluster Collaboration of schools means that you and your staff have regular opportunities to share good practice beyond the school and check the quality of each other's work. Consequently, you have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, resulting in the well-thought-out plans for continuous improvement.

You and the staff have developed an effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Your latest assessments show that, in almost all year groups, all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making at least the progress which the school expects from their starting points. Your assessments also show a significant increase in the proportion of pupils attaining at the expected standard for their age compared to 2017, especially in writing and mathematics. Evidence from my observations of learning during the inspection and from the work in pupils' books confirms that your assessments are accurate. Teachers' expectations for the quality of work pupils produce are high in almost all year groups.

Pupils, parents and carers alike speak warmly about the school. Pupils told me that their learning is 'fun' and 'interesting'. Another described it as 'a privilege' to be part of the school. Pupils with whom I met readily recalled memorable aspects of their learning, such as a topic about astronomy and a range of science experiments. Pupils showed a natural enthusiasm for science and one commented, aptly, that 'science can change the world'. The vast majority of parents who completed the online survey are strongly supportive of the school, for example praising the 'excellent school with staff who go out of their way to help pupils and parents'. Another stated, 'My children enjoy going to school and are very happy.' Members of staff who completed the online survey say they are proud to work at the school and have confidence in the leadership.

The well-resourced and attractive indoor and outdoor spaces are a striking feature of the school. Pupils' physical, social and emotional development is effectively promoted by the wide range of activities available for them to enjoy at playtimes and lunchtimes.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils, staff and parents say the school is safe. Pupils have high regard for the quality of care and support they receive from all staff. They told me they receive regular teaching about safety and they showed a clear understanding of bullying. They stressed, however, that this is a happy and orderly school.

All of the staff with whom I spoke confirmed that they receive regular safeguarding training. There are clear systems in place for reporting and recording any welfare concerns. In your role as designated leader for safeguarding, you are tenacious in providing support for vulnerable pupils and families.

The recruitment checks on staff and volunteers meet statutory requirements. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and carefully documented. Records show that, when a concern is raised, prompt actions are taken, including the involvement of other agencies if required.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we considered together the impact of your work to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years and in key stage 1. You had rightly identified this as an area of focus because attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 was typically below the national average. As a result of revised training for staff and closer monitoring of standards, your latest assessments show that attainment in reading and mathematics is rising, especially in Year 1. This was confirmed by checking the work in pupils' books.
- Provision in the early years is effective. During the Reception Year, children make consistently good progress from their starting points, which are often below those typical for their age. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years is increasing. The quality of the work in children's well-presented 'learning journals' is impressive. Staff in the early years provide a rich variety of well-planned activities, both indoors and outdoors, which effectively promote the children's learning and development.
- You have strengthened the provision for disadvantaged pupils by appointing a new leader to closely analyse the impact of the teaching on pupils' attainment and progress. She has ensured that the additional support available for pupils is more precisely targeted to their needs. As result of her effective actions, disadvantaged pupils are currently making accelerated progress in almost all year groups.
- The work in pupils' books is well presented in almost all year groups, especially in key stage 2. Teachers' expectations for the highest quality of presentation are less evident in key stage 1. Pupils' handwriting is typically neat and well formed. In particular, the 'best books', which contain samples of pupils' writing in a range of subjects, provide an impressive showcase for pupils' writing skills in all year groups.
- Governors are effective in their roles. They are actively involved, along with you, in setting the priorities for school improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recent improvements in attainment and progress are consistent across all year groups
- teachers in all year groups have consistently high expectations for pupils' presentation of their work and the quality of their handwriting.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will

be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held a series of meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with a group of middle leaders. I met with the chair of the governing body and a small group of governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I conducted a tour of the school with you to look at pupils' learning and I spoke with a range of teaching and support staff. I spoke with pupils during a group discussion and informally during lessons. I examined pupils' work in their books. I considered 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I examined a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's analysis of pupils' current and past achievement, leaders' monitoring records, external reports about the school, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation summary and its plans for improvement.