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Mr J A Gregory
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gregory

Short inspection of Sedgley Park Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained and further improved the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You know your school well and are accurate in your judgement of where Sedgley Park Community Primary is on its journey of improvement. Governors, parents and carers, pupils and the local authority adviser agree that the school has continued to improve under your committed, determined and collaborative leadership. The school has many strengths including pupils' good behaviour; leaders' and staff's commitment to the welfare and care of pupils and their families; and the strong progress pupils make in key stage 2.

Leaders, staff and governors have developed a warm and welcoming environment in the school, with strong relationships between staff, pupils and their families. There is a real and tangible family ethos, with all members of the school community recognising your inclusive approach to establishing partnerships. Leaders are determined to raise aspirations for all pupils. The nurturing and inclusive ethos is a key factor in breaking down barriers to pupils' learning. As a result, the attainment of current pupils is improving and they are making good, and sometimes better, progress.

Pupils are polite, respectful of each other's cultural backgrounds and well mannered. They state that they enjoy lessons: they appreciate the element of fun that teachers provide. Pupils value the variety of extra-curricular activities, including trips and various sports clubs. Parents feel that the school is really good at supporting their children and developing them academically. Parents typically

comment, 'My child has blossomed at this school.' Others agree, stating the staff are 'amazing'. Parents speak positively about the smooth transition into the Nursery class and the opportunity to see their children's work at the end of each term. Most parents ensure that their children attend school regularly, although some families take extended holidays.

Leaders and staff have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You were asked to improve teaching and have made effective use of training and a revised curriculum to ensure that pupils' progress continues to accelerate, particularly in English. Recent published data shows that the school's consistently high rates of progress have been maintained at key stage 2. Proportions of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standards in reading and mathematics in national tests in 2017 increased.

Although children make good progress in the early years, some boys and disadvantaged children do not achieve as well as others.

Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1, although not enough achieve greater depth in all of these subjects. Leaders have already identified these issues. For example, they have improved the teaching of both reading and writing through effective training to challenge pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. These actions are beginning to bear fruit and are beginning to improve outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1.

Inspectors also asked leaders to ensure that technology was used more effectively to support learning and prepare pupils for the modern world. Subject leaders have clarified the expectations for each year group in the revised curriculum. They check that these improvements are having a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Pupils are clear about the improvements introduced and could explain, with some pride, how technology is used to record and share their learning across the curriculum. Middle leaders are equally proud of links made with technology providers to enable them to raise further the technological skills of the pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and are sensitively deployed according to staff's knowledge of individual families. Leaders and governors fulfil statutory requirements when appointing new members of staff.

Parents and pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. Leaders, including governors, ensure that staff receive high-quality training. As a result, staff know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff are very clear about the school's procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they have regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Leaders are tenacious, but sympathetic, in their work to protect vulnerable pupils.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have implemented clear programmes to teach pupils about personal and internet safety. Pupils understand the dangers associated with internet use and report concerns to staff.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 have improved over the last few years because of leaders' resolve to develop the quality of teaching and learning and the wider curriculum. Consequently, results in 2017 had improved by the end of key stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics, but to a lesser degree in reading. A first line of enquiry, therefore, was to find out what you have done to improve reading across key stage 2. You and your leadership team have given reading a strong profile in school. A range of training for teachers has had a positive impact on the quality of pupils' reading. Leaders have introduced a number of strategies, including the additional reading support and activities for selected pupils. Teachers use high-quality texts to inspire and enthuse pupils to read in a wide variety of other subjects.
- You have also ensured that the teaching of reading provides greater challenge for the most able pupils. Staff support lower-attaining pupils, and those at risk of falling behind, to allow them to contribute fully during activities. As a result, these pupils make good progress over time. Due to these efforts, unvalidated results for Year 6 in 2018 show similarly high rates of progress as previous years, but also show increased proportions of pupils meeting the expected and higher standards in reading.
- My second line of enquiry was to evaluate the progress and attainment of pupils in the early years and key stage 1. While children make good progress from their low starting points in the early years, some boys and disadvantaged children do not achieve as well as others. Children who start their education in the Nursery make consistently good progress, compared to those who did not attend. You have started to focus more on the needs of those children with little or no prior Nursery experience by providing greater opportunities for language and social development.
- Pupils make good progress in reading in key stage 1. This is because teachers provide a varied programme which includes individual support, for example for those pupils who did not meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- In mathematics in key stage 1, teachers plan work which is focused precisely on pupils' identified needs. Teachers' explanations enable pupils to understand new ideas and answer questions confidently. Pupils' improving ability to reason and solve problems is beginning to deepen their mathematical understanding. As a result, their progress in mathematics is good.
- Pupils' work in their books in key stage 1 shows improving progress because their writing develops well over time. Teachers' clear and focused emphasis on improving pupils' vocabulary means that pupils now write accurately in detail and increasing length.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1. However, the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth is below the national average. You have identified this in your planning. Leaders are now focusing their attention on ensuring that even more pupils achieve at greater depth in their work.

- For my third line of enquiry I looked at what leaders are doing to improve attendance, especially of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders' effective monitoring of attendance and specific approaches taken with individual families have improved rates of attendance and punctuality. These, together with targets for improved attendance, are having a positive impact on attendance rates, with rates now similar for all groups of pupils. However, despite leaders' best efforts, some families still take pupils out of school for extended periods and this continues to have a detrimental effect on attendance rates.
- Finally, I investigated how effectively leaders use the pupil premium funding to enable disadvantaged pupils to make good progress and attain highly. Leaders provide a range of opportunities for disadvantaged pupils, including those which support both academic achievement and social and emotional development. The pupil premium funding is spent on identified priorities and governors monitor this closely.
- Staff, including specialists, provide support to enable disadvantaged pupils to develop their resilience and to further improve their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders also provide a wide range of activities which enrich the school's curriculum and give pupils opportunities and experiences such as residential visits. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is good and improving. Leaders provide challenging activities for the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2. However, disadvantaged pupils at key stage 1 do not perform as well as their peers at key stage 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- greater proportions of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and boys in the early years, reach a good level of development
- more pupils in key stage 1 reach greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics
- attendance improves, particularly for those families taking extended holidays.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Shackleton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, your staff and members of the governing body. I also met with pupils to seek their views about the school. I spoke with a representative from the local authority. I also spoke with pupils informally in the classroom and at lunchtime.

We observed teaching and learning together in various classes and I scrutinised pupils' work in writing and mathematics in Years 4 and 6 and particularly in key stage 1. In addition, I spoke to pupils about their reading.

I examined and discussed a range of documents, including those relating to attendance and safeguarding. I looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement priorities and its assessment information.

I considered the views expressed by parents gathered in the playground before the start of the school day and six responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the eight responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.