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Mrs Liz Bird
Executive Headteacher
Eythorne Elvington Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Bird

Short inspection of Eythorne Elvington Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 2019, 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 July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Your strong leadership, which is ably supported by the head of school, has resulted in a culture of high expectations and ambition for all pupils who attend the school. Your staff team are equally as committed to ensuring that every child achieves their very best. Staff work productively together and continually seek to improve their practice. The focus on continuous improvement results in teaching that is highly effective across the school, including in the early years. Pupils are challenged and supported appropriately in lessons. This results in them making excellent progress. Only occasionally do teachers choose tasks that do not challenge pupils well enough.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and recognise the hard work and dedication of the staff team. One parent said, 'I'd be delighted to recommend this school to anyone' while another wrote, 'The school is extremely welcoming and inclusive.' They are appreciative of the improvements to the school since you were appointed and are proud of the pupils' achievements.

You have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement at the previous inspection. An example of this is the work that you have done to ensure that pupils' presentation and handwriting is the best it can be. Pupils take pride in their work and

standards of presentation are consistently high in all year groups. In early years, pupils are taught how to form letters correctly and practise regularly. Pupils quickly progress to joining their handwriting in key stage 1 and this allows them to write quickly and neatly.

Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They report that poor behaviour is rare and teachers swiftly help them resolve any problems that arise. The way that pupils support each other in their learning is a particular strength of the school. Pupils in Year 6 were observed discussing in detail the best adverb to use in a piece of writing. In early years, a group of children were cooperating independently to build a trap for an evil character from a story that they had been reading. The effective collaboration between pupils arises from the clear expectations that teachers set and the strong pastoral support that is provided for them.

Governance of the school is strong. Governors are clear about their role and carry out their duties diligently. They ensure that resources available are used effectively. The federation between the two schools has resulted in shared staffing between the schools and enhanced opportunities for professional development. Leaders and governors have adapted the class structure effectively over time to ensure that the fluctuating number of pupils in different year groups is managed well. This has contributed to the improving rates of pupils' progress since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff receive thorough training to ensure that they are confident in reporting any concerns that they may have. Leaders take effective action to ensure that concerns are acted upon swiftly and pupils and their families receive good support when it is required. Leaders keep safeguarding records but these are not all stored in the same place. The system for record-keeping hinders accessing and reviewing information quickly.

Pupils trust staff to look after them and they know who to talk to if they have a concern or problem. The curriculum includes a range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and take appropriate risks. Visitors to the school, such as the fire brigade, help pupils to learn to stay safe. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of diversity and equalities. This contributes to the harmonious relationships between pupils and they report that bullying is extremely rare.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we agreed to focus on: pupils' attendance; how leaders ensure that pupils make strong progress; and how effectively the curriculum prepares pupils for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' rate of attendance declined in the last academic year and the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent increased. Leaders monitor the attendance of the most vulnerable pupils closely. Good attendance is a high priority for leaders and they take effective steps to support pupils and their families. Attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. There is still scope for leaders to build on the effective strategies in place to ensure that pupils who are persistently absent from school attend regularly.

- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make consistently strong progress throughout the school because teaching is highly effective. Teachers use assessment information about pupils to design tasks carefully. The individual needs of pupils are considered and where necessary additional support for pupils is provided. Teachers across the school demonstrate strong subject knowledge which they use effectively to provide pupils with clear explanations.
- Pupils report that they learn lots because teachers explain things well and they receive help when they require it. They are enthusiastic in their lessons and work hard to complete tasks. Pupils' determination to succeed results from the effective teaching that they experience and the careful thought that teachers give to providing pupils with resources that prevent them from getting stuck when working independently.
- The curriculum is carefully planned and prepares pupils well for their transition to secondary school. You and your staff team have thought carefully about what the pupils of Eythorne need to learn to allow them to be successful in their future lives. The three drivers of 'initiative', 'possibilities' and 'diversity' are at the heart of the school's curriculum. Teachers use them to enhance the subjects that they teach and plan themed weeks that are memorable. Pupils could recall in detail the different visitors to school during aspirations week, the jobs that they did and what they would need to learn if they wanted to do their dream job.
- You have ensured that pupils receive a broad curriculum that makes the most of the opportunities that are available within school and the local area. The school's outside space is used effectively to enhance learning. For example, pupils who were learning about Ancient Egypt built their own pyramids in outdoor learning. Specialist teachers in music and physical education contribute to the strong teaching that pupils receive in all subjects.
- Training for middle leaders has resulted in them being able to monitor, evaluate and improve their curriculum areas. They feel well supported by you and the head of school. Middle leaders have already begun work on evaluating the design of the curriculum so that progression within subjects is reviewed and really carefully planned for.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- procedures for recording safeguarding information are systematic, so that they mirror the strong practice in other areas of safeguarding
- the attendance of pupils continues to improve and persistent absence decreases.

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

Yours sincerely

James Freeston
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, senior leaders and representatives from the governing body. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority. I visited lessons across the school, to observe teaching, speak with pupils and look at their books. I spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and observed them at breaktime. I analysed 16 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. A range of documents were examined, including the school's self-evaluation; the school's improvement plan; and documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance information and the curriculum.