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Mrs Philippa Campbell
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Sketchley Hill Primary School Burbage
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Dear Mrs Campbell

Short inspection of Sketchley Hill Primary School Burbage

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up post as headteacher in February 2016, you have been joined by a new deputy headteacher. There have also been other staff, school leadership and governance changes. In spite of this, you have created a strong leadership team that improves the curriculum and ensures good teaching.

At the time of the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to provide opportunities for staff to share good practice within the school and with partner schools. You have addressed this well. You enable staff to share ideas with each other and develop good practice together. The school now works in partnership with a teaching school alliance, which aids the development of staff's leadership and teaching skills. Additionally, since the previous inspection, school leaders and governors have improved the rigour with which they evaluate the school's work.

Leaders were also asked to improve the standards of presentation in pupils' books. You make sure that the 'Sketchley script' is used consistently well by staff in the teaching of handwriting. This, together with the replacement of folders with books, is improving presentation and encourages pupils to take pride in their work.

Your school is a purposeful place where pupils' contributions are valued. Pupils like being recognised as 'Character champions' for demonstrating perseverance, respect and tolerance. During my visit, class representatives confidently introduced

themselves and told me about their learning. Pupils told me about the various ways they help their school and teachers, with a positive effect on their personal development.

Pupils enjoy their learning and parents and carers agree. During the inspection, the response from parents about the school's work was overwhelmingly positive. This comment is typical of the very many received: 'The staff are really committed to ensuring the children receive a thorough but also interesting education. My child comes home bursting with excitement about the things he has learned.'

You and other school leaders evaluate the curriculum effectively to ensure pupils' good progress. Attractive displays show how well subjects such as art, history and geography are linked together. In some of the lessons that we visited, staff used history topics well to develop pupils' writing. I was impressed by the way pupils in Year 3 talked knowledgeably about life during the Roman and Victorian periods.

You have made significant improvements to the teaching of phonics. A new and consistent approach to teaching is well matched to pupils' abilities. You help parents to understand how phonics is taught at your school. The percentage of pupils in Year 1 who reach the expected standard has risen and is now well above average.

Your analysis of pupils' progress in reading in recent years has led to whole-school improvement. You and subject leaders check that teaching is consistently effective in helping all pupils to achieve well. Pupils read frequently and widely. When I listened to pupils read, they told me that they enjoy receiving awards for reading regularly. Lower-attaining pupils receive extra help to improve. The most able read fluently and understand plots and storylines well. You recognise that the consistent development of higher-level skills such as inference, especially for the most able pupils, is an ongoing priority.

You and your staff are developing pupils' writing as fully as possible in order to encourage pupils to work at greater depth. Staff expect well-structured writing, although pupils' writing is not as consistently good in a range of subjects as it is in English. There are some very good examples of interesting topics motivating pupils to write. However, some of the most able pupils told me they would like to write even more extensively.

In mathematics, you and subject leaders ensure that pupils of all abilities now develop reasoning skills. In most cases, work is well matched to ability. Pupils I spoke to during lessons said they like using various ways to reach their answers. However, the most able pupils I spoke to said they would like even more challenge to demonstrate their understanding. Sometimes, tasks for lower-attaining pupils are too difficult for them to successfully apply what they know.

You identify and address any differences in performance between boys and girls. This is raising boys' attainment by the end of the early years and helping girls to develop the confidence to achieve well in mathematics. You analyse how well pupils

from disadvantaged backgrounds are doing. You recognise where differences in performance remain and you have improved the extra support disadvantaged pupils receive in order to speed up their progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

You collect and analyse information about pupils' progress systematically. However, the systems that you and your leaders use are not precise enough to recognise the small steps in progress made by some of the lower-attaining pupils. The meetings you hold with staff about pupils' progress are not frequent enough to ensure rapid identification of those pupils who need to catch up.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your designated leaders keep staff well informed and raise their awareness of any potential risks to pupils' safety. You ensure that staff receive relevant training so that they know how to keep pupils safe. Systems to vet adults who work with pupils are thorough and well maintained.

You keep detailed and confidential records of any child protection issues that may occur. You work well with external agencies. Your very positive relationships with parents enable good communication and effective action should any concerns arise over pupils' welfare.

You make sure that the curriculum, and teaching during assemblies, addresses safety issues, including the potential risks posed by using technology and the internet. You involve outside agencies, such as the NSPCC, to teach pupils about safety. In this way, pupils receive suitable guidance on how to keep safe.

When I spoke to pupils, they talked sensibly about what constitutes bullying and whom to speak to if they have any worries. The rare incidents of bullying that do occur are logged and followed up. You maintain detailed records of any inappropriate behaviour and staff check frequently on the well-being of pupils.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have rightly identified that more pupils are capable of working at greater depth than indicated by the end of Year 6 test results in 2017. Improvements to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics are enabling pupils to make good progress.
- The most able pupils now build more strongly on the levels they reached by the end of key stage 1. There is increasing challenge for them to excel in reading, writing and mathematics. However, some approaches to teaching, for example in developing comprehension skills, are too new to yet ensure that the most able make the best possible progress.
- Senior leaders review regularly the extra support given to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to effectively secure pupils' good progress. Any differences in performance between this group of pupils and others are

diminishing. In many cases, disadvantaged pupils are doing better than their peers.

- As they move through the school, pupils make good progress in acquiring complex writing styles. However, teachers do not expect pupils to maintain the same high standard whenever they write.
- In mathematics, teachers develop pupils' reasoning skills and provide tasks to deepen pupils' understanding. However, tasks for lower-attaining pupils are sometimes pitched too high for their existing skills.
- Systems used by leaders are not fully effective in recognising the progress made by all groups of pupils. Discussions with staff are not frequent enough to quickly identify pupils falling behind.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils develop higher-level skills consistently well
- pupils write as well in other subjects as they do in English
- lower-attaining pupils build solidly on what they already know in mathematics
- systems give an accurate view of pupils' progress which is shared more frequently with teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Vivienne McTiffen
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the leaders of English and mathematics. We discussed the school's progress information and we looked at work in pupils' books. I also met the chair of the governing body along with three other governors. I visited some classes with you to observe the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. I spoke to pupils during lessons about their work. I met with a group of pupils and listened to some pupils read. I took into account the 137 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the written comments submitted by parents. I also spoke to parents during the

inspection. I analysed the 20 responses to the questionnaire completed by staff. I scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks, looked at documentation relating to safeguarding and discussed the school's safeguarding procedures with you and staff. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and the development plan.