

22 June 2018

Mrs Edel Gillespie  
Headteacher  
Leagrave Primary School  
Strangers Way  
Luton  
Bedfordshire  
LU4 9ND

Dear Mrs Gillespie

### **Short inspection of Leagrave Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 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.

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.

The school's motto, 'striving for excellence, learning for life', typifies your leaders' ambitions and aspirations for pupils at Leagrave Primary School. Your inspirational leadership sets the tone for success. Your leaders tackle barriers to pupils' learning with a strong sense of purpose and determination. You have built a stable and collegiate team whose members work together to provide a stimulating environment in which pupils thrive. Parents acknowledge the commitment of staff to create an 'oasis of opportunity' for their children. Parents and staff who responded to the Ofsted surveys were extremely positive in their views about the school. One parent wrote, 'The staff are amazing and they always make sure that the pupils get the best of everything.' Other parents and carers made similar comments.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching. You place a high priority on training, and leaders play an active role within a teaching alliance partnership. Teachers take time to research the best practice, work with experts and have opportunities to observe one another. This has helped them become better teachers. From the evidence I gathered during inspection, I found

teaching over time to be consistently strong. Teachers regularly check the understanding of pupils through their skilful use of questioning. Teachers also ensure that learning activities are well matched to pupils' learning needs so that they make strong progress.

You were also asked to raise standards in writing and mathematics. Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment has improved rapidly. In the most recent key stage 2 national tests, the proportion of pupils reaching both the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average.

Pupils' progress from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and in the highest 2% nationally. A high proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and they make better progress than other pupils nationally. Your monitoring information indicates that this should continue with further improvements for current pupils.

Pupils are proud of their school and confidently talk about their learning. They are polite and respectful of one another because relationships are built upon trust and mutual respect. One pupil made this clear to me by saying, 'Always treat others how you would want to be treated.' Those whom I observed in lessons behaved in an exemplary manner. Pupils undertake responsibilities with enthusiasm, fulfilling roles such as school prefects, play leaders, school councillors or as one of the eco ambassadors.

Governors are committed to and share the high aspirations of leaders. They understand the challenges faced in the school community and the effective ways your team respond to meet them. Governors make good use of the accurate information you provide them with to check the quality of education. They provide the correct balance of support and challenge to ensure that the actions leaders take are productive.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All the senior leaders are trained as designated leaders of safeguarding because you recognise the importance of providing a safe and nurturing environment for the pupils. Your main designated safeguarding leader, together with the home-school liaison officer, ensure that pupils and their families who need additional support receive it in a timely manner. Your leaders are tenacious in the way they pursue this support.

Your leaders ensure that all staff receive regular good-quality safeguarding training. Induction procedures are thorough for new staff. Signs around the school remind staff about their safeguarding responsibilities. This is contributing to a strong culture of vigilance. Staff are alert to potential signs of concerns and know how to report them using the clear procedures. All the required checks regarding the suitability of staff who work with children are carried out and clearly recorded.

Pupils say that they feel safe. Pupils understand about different forms of bullying and report that there is none of this type of behaviour in their school. In their view, everyone follows the school rules so there are no problems. Pupils act as play buddies to make sure that their schoolmates play fairly and always have games to join in at breaktimes.



Your pupil digital leaders teach other children how to use the internet safely and recognise potential dangers. Pupils told me that if they had any issues, they would talk to adults who would respond to their concerns. All parents who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, said that their children were safe at the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry involved checking that, from their starting points in Year 3, the most able pupils are making good progress in reading. Your leaders have acted quickly to ensure that progress for the most able readers is improving. Training has increased teacher's awareness of the type of texts to challenge and develop pupils' comprehension skills. Teachers place a greater focus upon extending pupils' knowledge of different words through the modelling of complex sentences. The most able pupils use challenging texts to develop their inference and deduction skills. For example, pupils use their knowledge of synonyms to provide alternative words and improve the meaning of sentences. Evidence in pupils' workbooks demonstrates their good progress through their written responses to comprehension questions.
- Your leaders have raised expectations for pupils to read daily from the challenging books you provide. Additional high-quality texts have further improved the range of reading materials in class libraries. The most able pupils told me that they enjoy completing reviews when they have finished a book. Teachers monitor these reviews to check on the progress pupils are making with their reading. Pupils discussed their favourite authors and the types of books they enjoyed. They read expressively and answered questions about the text confidently. The school's assessment information shows that the most able pupils are making better progress than they have in the past.
- My second line of enquiry focused on how well pupils use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read and write. Pupils' scores at the Year 1 phonics screening check have been above the national averages for the past three years. However, at the end of key stage 1, lower proportions of pupils reach the expected standards in reading and writing. I found that the teaching of phonics is highly effective. Your teachers have worked together to create a structured approach that progresses through the different stages of learning in phonics. I observed pupils using their knowledge of phonics accurately to read and write words with the sound they were practising. I listened to some pupils from Year 1 read. Pupils are able to decode the letter patterns and read the words fluently.
- You and your leaders have identified that, despite the teaching of phonics being strong, there is more to do to help pupils who struggle with developing their writing skills. You provide skilful support for pupils, many of whom have English as an additional language. You place a high emphasis on adults modelling language through targeted interventions. Work in pupils' books shows that they write neatly and use punctuation accurately. Your actions to improve pupils' vocabulary mean that many make significant gains in their early reading and writing at the end of key stage 1. However, you recognise that your approaches, linking intervention work into writing opportunities, needs refining to ensure that higher proportions of pupils attain the expected standards in writing by the end of key stage 1.



- My third line of enquiry involved exploring how well leaders check what children know and need to do to progress in the early years. A large proportion of children enter the early years with starting points well below those typical for their age. However, you and your early years leader act quickly to make the start of school a positive experience for both children and parents. Leaders make use of assessment and effective planning to ensure that every child receives high-quality teaching and experiences every day. Leaders support parents by making effective links to children's learning at home. Children benefit from a vibrant classroom where they are encouraged to be active, curious and independent. This is providing current children with opportunities to develop and extend their skills and understanding in all areas of learning.
- Your leaders address the learning needs of children effectively by immersing them in a rich environment of language. For example, they label their castle designs before starting construction or take the orders for cleaning the big toys at the car wash. Adults question and challenge children to think more deeply about their work. For example, one child recorded how she planted a bean seed and the adult challenged her to think about how she could write the activity in different stages. Records of learning accurately identify children's progress so that targeted activities meet children's next steps. As a result, children are making strong progress from their starting points.
- Finally, I wanted to ensure that pupils make good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. Leaders have developed a curriculum that provides varied experiences to inspire pupils and prepare them well for their next stage of education. You place a high importance on providing opportunities for pupils to participate in first-hand experiences and help them better understand the topics they are studying. You make effective links with local agencies and services to develop pupils' knowledge of the place where they live. Consequently, pupils' social and personal development is good and benefits from a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Leaders use a thematic approach to deliver the wider curriculum. Pupils' creative books and displays around the school bear witness to the rich variety and depth to which topics are studied. For example, in Year 6, pupils learned about the experiences of a soldier fighting in the First World War. Pupils used his diaries to develop well their skills of recount and writing emotively. Work in science is a strength of the school. Regular science investigations involve practical activities and pupils develop skills of prediction and analysis. Evidence from inspection shows that pupils apply their basic skills well across the curriculum.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable about the areas they lead. Leaders look at topic books regularly to check that work is of a consistent standard across all subjects. They regularly monitor the skills pupils are covering through teachers' plans and the work in pupils' exercise books. However, not all leaders know how different groups of pupils are performing in each subject. This is because the system for assessing skills in subjects other than English and mathematics is not embedded.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attainment in writing is improved at key stage 1, by refining approaches to support pupils' development and use of language in their written work
- leaders evaluate the progress groups and cohorts made by establishing the system for assessing pupils' skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Mellors  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leaders. I had separate meetings with your designated lead for safeguarding, your English and phonics leaders, the early years leader and had discussions with six of your subject leaders. I spoke with two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

I visited classes with your senior leaders, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I heard pupils read their books and discussed their reading choices. I met with a group of pupils from across the school. I scrutinised several documents, including your self-evaluation, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of 182 responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also took account of 40 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.