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Mr Mark Whyman
Headteacher
Heath Fields Primary School
Field Avenue
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Dear Mr Whyman

Short inspection of Heath Fields Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 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 the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have demonstrated the capacity to make improvements. For example, pupils' progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was below that found in other schools nationally. You made changes to how you teach mathematics. As a result, progress in 2017 had improved and was broadly average. However, you recognise that teaching can improve further to enable more pupils to achieve highly in mathematics and reading at the end of both key stages 1 and 2.

Children achieve well in the early years. Staff assess the children's phonic knowledge and adapt their teaching to ensure that children have a good knowledge of the letter sounds to enable them to read and write. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in 2017 was above the national average. Pupils in Year 1 have achieved higher than other pupils nationally in the phonics check over the past three years.

Pupils make broadly average progress through the school. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was broadly in line with other pupils nationally. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 at the expected levels was above the national average in 2017. The proportion of pupils who achieved highly at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 was just below the national average in reading and mathematics, but in line in

writing. Disadvantaged pupils do not attain as highly as other pupils nationally at the end of key stage 2.

You and your team have created a positive climate for learning and pupils enjoy coming to school. They cooperate well with each other both in the classrooms and outside. You encourage pupils to participate in a wide variety of sports. The pupils enter many local competitions and there are clubs before school and at lunchtimes for pupils to keep active and have fun. Some pupils have been motivated by watching the England netball team train recently.

The curriculum is varied and has an emphasis on enterprise and pupils are given the opportunity to raise money for charity using their own ideas. Pupils are encouraged to read at home and teachers regularly check their reading record books to ensure that this is happening. Nevertheless, some of the older pupils are not as fluent in their reading as they should be. Pupils' scientific skills are well supported. In Year 3 pupils applied the principles of fair testing to design an investigation about tooth decay. They analysed which variables remained constant and which could be changed to complete the testing fairly.

Governors know the school well and ask leaders about the progress of pupils. They are fully aware of the school's priorities for improvement. Parents are supportive of the school and the large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey Parent View would recommend the school to others.

The school's last inspection report asked you to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all staff have high expectations for the amount of work that pupils complete in a lesson. Although most teachers do expect pupils to complete an appropriate amount of work, there is some variability in key stage 1. Some teachers through the school are not consistently expecting pupils to think hard in lessons, and their expectations of what pupils can achieve can be too low. Therefore, pupils do not make as much progress as they should, particularly in mathematics.

Following this inspection, I have asked you to improve the attendance and outcomes of disadvantaged pupils so they achieve as well as other pupils nationally.

Safeguarding is effective.

The procedures for reporting a concern are well understood by the staff. The record-keeping is detailed and prompt action is taken following concerns raised. You keep relevant staff informed. You also record the actions taken by external agencies, and the outcomes of those actions, to ensure that everyone is up to date about a child's well-being.

Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. Pupils have the opportunity for positive play to support their emotional well-being. Pupils say that behaviour is good and bullying is minimal. They value the messages learned in assemblies and have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and are alert to the dangers of water and train tracks.

The chair of governors regularly checks the school's safeguarding provision. Leaders have ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- You and your team have prioritised the importance of good attendance and your work is showing some positive improvements. Pupils' attendance had been much lower than the national average until last year, when it was just below the national average. You have set up rewards for good attendance and send out letters to parents and carers if their child's attendance causes concern. You have not authorised term-time holidays. You have worked well with the small community of Travellers and their attendance is much higher than historically has been the case.
- However, while the current overall attendance for all pupils continues to improve and is now in line with that of other pupils nationally, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not at the same level. You have used the pupil premium funding to pay for breakfast club places for some disadvantaged pupils and this has resulted in improved attendance. In addition, the number of disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent has dropped in the current academic year. Nonetheless, you recognise the need to work more closely with parents of disadvantaged pupils to ensure that the attendance of this group of pupils improves to that of pupils nationally.
- The outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have been variable. Weak attendance has had a negative impact on their progress. The acting assistant headteacher closely tracks the progress of this group of pupils and ensures that intervention programmes are in place to support those pupils who are at risk of underachieving. These are having some impact on progress and more disadvantaged pupils are on track to make better progress. However, you and your team have not systematically checked that the intervention programmes are benefiting all disadvantaged pupils to ensure that their progress is accelerated.
- Pupils are competent in their written mathematical calculations. They have regular opportunities to problem solve. Teachers in Year 6 and in both Year 2 classes provide many opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically and think hard. Similar opportunities are not as prevalent in other year groups. There are occasions when pupils do not move on quickly to more challenging work to accelerate their progress. Pupils told me that mathematics can be too easy for them.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of texts. Teachers use inspirational texts to motivate the pupils to read and write. In Year 4, pupils reflected on how the Iron Man may have felt at different parts of the story by Ted Hughes. This made the pupils think hard to justify their answers.
- Pupils are developing into good writers. Teachers are supporting pupils to improve their sentence construction. Year 5 pupils have studied 'Romeo and Juliet'. One pupil wrote, 'Beside the tomb he saw Tybalt, pale as candle wax.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils improves
- teachers' expectations are consistently high to ensure that more pupils attain highly at the end of both key stages, particularly in 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 Derbyshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the two acting assistant headteachers and the acting leader of English. I spoke with parents and observed pupils at breaktime. I visited all the classrooms with you, and looked at pupils' work. I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I met with a group of pupils and heard pupils read. You and I reviewed records about keeping children safe. I studied your school development plan and your self-evaluation. I considered the 29 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 14 responses to the pupil survey and the 11 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.