

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



20 June 2017

Mr Peter Box and Mr Paul Whitcombe
Executive Headteachers
Lord Scudamore Primary Academy
Friar Street
Hereford
Herefordshire
HR4 0AS

Dear Mr Box and Mr Whitcombe

Short inspection of Lord Scudamore Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 8 June 2017 with Helen Davies, Ofsted Inspector, 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your senior team and governors lead a school in which pupils are happy and keen to learn. Your leadership team supports you well and shows a determination to bring about further improvement. Parents comment positively about the school's work, highlighting how quickly their children settle in school, the good progress that their children make and how approachable the teachers are. The great majority of parents would recommend the school to others.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about the school and they appreciate the help and support that they receive from their teachers. They enjoy lessons, trips, extra-curricular activities and meeting visitors, all of which help to bring the curriculum to life. Behaviour is good around school and pupils speak about systems being fair and used consistently. Older pupils have the opportunity to take on increasing responsibilities such as those of head boy and girl, their deputies, prefects and school council representatives. Pupils feel that they can influence decisions made by school leaders in order to ensure that the school is a happy environment in which everyone can learn.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at your previous inspection. Teaching assistants are used in a variety of ways to effectively support pupils' development across the school. Pupils are increasingly aware of the next steps that they need to take in their learning. For example, in many classes, there are clear systems in place which help pupils to know what they are aiming to achieve, and help them to review and improve their work. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress. You are aware of the need to ensure that these effective approaches are used consistently across the school.

There is a great deal of high-quality teaching within school. Leaders and teachers regularly assess the progress pupils are making, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there is some variability in practice and some pupils, especially the most able, may not make as much progress as they could. The effective approaches and high expectations seen in the majority of classes need to be applied by all teachers and across a wide range of subjects.

You regularly work collaboratively with schools in your multi-academy trust and from across Herefordshire. This provides you, your leaders and staff with opportunities to share, and learn from, effective practice. Pupils also benefit by having opportunities to meet and work alongside pupils from a variety of schools and backgrounds.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping children safe is at the heart of your work. You have created a team, led by your safeguarding and child welfare manager, which ensures that the school is a safe environment for pupils and that they are well cared for at all times. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a very high quality. The safeguarding team has comprehensive plans to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding practice are up to date and effective.

All staff have regular and appropriate training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe and they are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns. Governors monitor the impact of school procedures through termly reports.

As a result of these actions, pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school and know whom to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. For example, pupils speak about the 'bubblebox', where they can record any worries that they have. Pupils are confident that a member of the safeguarding team will follow these up quickly. Pupils are taught to stay safe as part of the school's curriculum, and this includes keeping safe online. Parents are confident that their children are well looked after. As one parent commented, 'Lord Scudamore is a very caring school.'

Inspection findings

- Across the school, the majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. From evidence seen in lessons and books, most pupils are working at the standards expected for their age. In-school data shows that disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are making progress at least in line with other pupils. Differences in outcomes between these groups and other pupils are diminishing.
- Staff demonstrate good subject knowledge and there are positive relationships between pupils and adults. Across the school there is much effective teaching. Teachers have high expectations and organise activities in a variety of ways to which pupils respond well. For example, pupils were seen to work in small groups to solve a mathematics problem, in pairs to decide how to make a sentence more interesting and independently to write an account based on their history topic. In each case, pupils focused on the task and made good progress. Lessons are generally well paced and pupils have opportunities to explain their thinking. In a small number of lessons, you agreed with inspectors that teaching did not match these high expectations. Some pupils' books also reflect the variability in teachers' expectations.
- You have created a strong leadership team. Leaders at all levels are conscientious and enthusiastic. Your phase leaders work together to ensure that there are effective systems in place to support consistency within and across year groups. They carefully track pupils' progress and take appropriate actions to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. For example, as a result of their work, you have introduced a basic skills programme in mathematics across the school. This short, daily session for all pupils is proving effective in raising standards as pupils' competence and confidence in basic calculations develop.
- Subject leaders are passionate about their subject areas. English, mathematics and science leaders closely monitor pupils' progress in their subjects and track the progress of key groups of pupils. However, this is not as well developed in other subject areas and is an aspect for further work. Similarly, the monitoring of opportunities for pupils to apply their English and mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects is an area for development.
- You and your team provide effective support for pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. Disadvantaged pupils' needs are addressed in a variety of ways including additional in-class and small-group academic support, social and emotional support, and access to extra-curricular visits and activities. You also provide input specifically for children from service families. This is well received by both pupils and their parents. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that the majority of pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making good progress.

- During lessons, teachers support groups of pupils in a variety of ways. For

example, in mathematics, pupils might complete the same task but with different numbers to make the activity more or less challenging. In writing, a word list may support some pupils to write independently. In key stage 2, you group pupils by ability for literacy and mathematics, and this is the main way in which you ensure that the most able pupils are given opportunities to work at greater depth. Across the school, particularly in mathematics, while it is clear that your most able pupils develop reasoning skills and work at a higher standard, there is also evidence that some pupils complete the work easily and may not be making as much progress as they could.

- Pupils' attendance improved in 2016 and attendance rates were a little above the national average. However, attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was lower than for the rest of the school. Information for the current school year shows that overall attendance is similar to last year's. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved and is now above the national average. The actions you take, such as working with specific families and through rewards for pupils, are making a positive difference. The procedures your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- effective practice in school is shared so that there is greater consistency in teaching that provides sufficient challenge to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able
- current good practice in monitoring and assessing pupils' progress across the school is applied to a wider range of subjects, and subject leaders monitor opportunities for using English and mathematics skills in their subject areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, my colleague and I met with you and your senior leadership team. We visited classes across the school where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at work in some books. One of you joined me or my colleague during each observation.

My colleague and I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils both formally and informally. My colleague listened to some pupils read. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. We scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, sample subject action plans, minutes of governors' meetings and documents relating to safeguarding.

I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I took account of the 60 responses to, Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 43 comments received electronically. I also took account of the six responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.