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20 June 2018

Mrs Rebecca Eaton
Headteacher
Ark Tindal Primary Academy
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Dear Mrs Eaton

Short inspection of Ark Tindal Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 6 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 October 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 have led the school through a period of considerable staff change effectively, and you have ensured that this has not affected pupils' progress. You have the support and confidence of the staff, who work closely together to help pupils to achieve well.

You have developed a positive ethos. The school's values of achievement, scholarship, perseverance, integrity, responsibility and enthusiasm support pupils' excellent behaviour. Pupils are motivated learners, who are keen to do their best. They concentrate well, work hard and listen attentively in lessons. Pupils' conduct is exemplary. They are extremely polite and show respectful attitudes to one another and to adults.

Parents are supportive of the school. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who spoke to me during the inspection, are appreciative of the hard work of you and your staff. They say that their children are well cared for and receive a good education at Ark Tindal Primary Academy.

You and the deputy headteacher are rigorous in your approach to improving teaching and learning and holding staff to account. You have introduced a 'three teacher model' in each year group. This provides opportunities for staff to plan teaching together and ensures that all pupils receive the support that they need. The experienced 'third teacher' in each year group supports less experienced

teachers and those new to the profession well. This includes 'live feedback' during lessons to help teachers to hone their skills. Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching, identify areas for further improvement and provide coaching for staff. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school.

You and your staff have made progress in addressing the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. They make strong progress from their different starting points as they move through the school. Leaders have worked with teachers to improve their planning so that it meets pupils' needs more closely. However, observations in lessons and work in pupils' books show that teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils. This means that this group of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Staff have received training to support them in meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The inclusion leader visits lessons to check on the progress of these pupils. He provides feedback to teachers to help them to improve their practice. As a result, most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress in writing and mathematics. Leaders are aware that the progress of this group of pupils is currently less strong in reading, and they are taking appropriate action to address this.

You have taken action to accelerate the progress of the most able pupils. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 rose in 2017. However, the proportion of pupils working at the higher standards in key stage 1 remains below national averages. Similarly, the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard in mathematics in key stage 2 was just below the national average in 2017.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff receive training to ensure that they are up to date with the latest guidance and know the process to follow should they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders make checks to ensure that staff fully understand their responsibilities in regard to safeguarding pupils. As a result, staff report concerns promptly. Records show that leaders take swift and appropriate action to protect pupils in response to concerns raised. Support for vulnerable pupils is strong. The pastoral team meets weekly to share information about these pupils and to ensure that the help pupils receive is making a positive difference.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and talk confidently about 'stranger danger' and what to do to stay safe online. Pupils spoken to during the inspection say that they feel safe at school and that they can talk to an adult if they have a worry or a concern. Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take, including verbal, physical and cyber bullying. They say that bullying sometimes happens but that adults are quick to address this. All of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children feel safe at

school.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to find out if pupils in key stage 1 are making consistently good progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders ensure that teachers have the right skills and support to teach pupils well. Teachers meet regularly in year-group teams to review pupils' progress and to identify pupils who are not making the progress that they should. They use class action plans to ensure that pupils who need extra support receive the help that they need. Experienced teachers work with identified individuals and groups of pupils to accelerate their progress. Leaders also make checks on pupils' progress, and they hold teachers to account for the progress that pupils are making. As a result, school assessment information shows that a high proportion of pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics over time. Many pupils make rapid progress. However, observations in lessons and work in books show that the most able pupils do not consistently make fast enough progress to reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- My second line of enquiry was to investigate how effectively teachers in key stage 1 are meeting the needs of the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics to enable them to achieve well.
- The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics has been below national averages for the past two years. Leaders have responded to this. They have provided training to improve teachers' subject knowledge, use of assessment and questioning skills to ensure greater challenge for the most able pupils. During the inspection, we observed teachers asking effective questions to encourage pupils to explain their thinking. Pupils, particularly the most able pupils, thrive on this challenge and give confident and articulate responses.
- The most able pupils read with fluency, accuracy and understanding. They make good use of expression and intonation when reading aloud. Work in books shows that this group of pupils make strong progress in being able to structure and organise their writing. They use an increasingly wide and descriptive vocabulary and write in sentences of growing complexity. However, these pupils are capable of making even better progress. Teachers do not consistently provide the most able pupils with sufficient levels of challenge in lessons. Similarly, this group of pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills at greater depth. As a result, the proportions of current pupils working at the higher standard in writing remains low.
- Work in books shows that the most able pupils make inconsistent progress in mathematics. This is because work is not challenging enough for them to make consistently strong progress. Too often, these pupils complete work that is too easy and does not require them to work at greater depth. Opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to reason and solve problems are limited. Consequently, not enough pupils are working at the higher standard

in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.

- My third line of enquiry was to look at how well teaching meets the needs of boys in reading and writing, to enable them to make good progress and achieve high standards in key stage 2.
- Boys' rates of progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 have been below those of girls for the past two years. The proportion of boys achieving the expected standard in writing has been below girls for the past two years. The proportion of boys achieving the higher standards in reading and writing was also below girls in 2016 and 2017.
- Leaders have started to take effective action to accelerate boys' progress in reading and writing. They have introduced core texts for pupils to read that appeal equally to the interests of boys and girls. Teachers plan topics to engage boys and stimulate their curiosity. Leaders have identified that spelling is a particular weakness for boys, and they have recently introduced an interactive spelling programme to improve pupils' skills. Staff make regular checks on pupils' progress and boys who are not making the progress that they should receive additional support to help them catch up with their peers. As a result, the proportion of boys making strong progress in reading and writing in Years 5 and 6 is rising. However, in Years 3 and 4 girls continue to make more rapid progress than boys do. Furthermore, the proportion of boys working at the standards expected for their age remain below those of girls in all year groups. The gap is widest in Years 3 and 4.
- My fourth line of enquiry was to explore how effectively provision in science and the wider curriculum meets pupils' needs and enables them to make good progress in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders ensure that pupils access the full national curriculum. Music is a particular strength. Each year, all pupils in key stage 2 learn to play a different musical instrument, such as the ukulele, drums and violin. Leaders provide a range of after-school clubs to broaden pupils' experiences in sport, art, drama and dance. Regular trips and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. They are positive about the range of clubs on offer and enjoy the trips that they undertake.
- Pupils study history and geography through a range of engaging topics. Teachers use these topics to provide interesting opportunities for pupils to write at length, particularly in Year 6. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing a breadth of knowledge and understanding as they move through the school, along with improving their writing skills. However, opportunities for pupils to develop subject-specific skills in history and geography are very limited. For example, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn map skills or the skills of historical enquiry. Consequently, pupils make slow progress in this aspect of their learning and their skills are underdeveloped.
- Pupils' attainment in science in key stage 1 has been below the national average for the past two years. This is because teachers do not match work closely enough to the different abilities of pupils. Teachers do not provide the most able pupils with enough challenge to achieve the high standards of which they are

capable. In addition, there is a lack of skills development. For example, pupils have too few opportunities to plan and carry out scientific investigations. Work in books shows that pupils in key stage 1 do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills in science.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently provide the most able pupils with activities that challenge them to achieve the high standards of which they are capable
- boys' progress in reading and writing in key stage 2 continues to accelerate so that a higher proportion of boys are working at, and above, the standards expected for their age
- teachers recognise the skills that pupils need to acquire in subjects such as science, history and geography, and that they provide opportunities for pupils to develop these skills effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers and the deputy designated safeguarding lead. I met with the chair of the governing body and the governance officer for the trust. I also met with the regional director for the trust. I observed pupils' learning in eight parts of lessons with you and the deputy headteacher. I observed pupils' learning in a further three parts of lessons with you and the assistant headteacher. I looked at pupils' work in a range of books with you and other senior leaders. I held a meeting with representatives from the school council and talked to pupils in lessons. I also listened to pupils read. I examined a range of documentation, including information relating to current pupils' attainment and progress and your evaluation of the school's performance. I also scrutinised a range of safeguarding documents. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took into account the 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.