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Mrs Emma Hardy
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hardy

Short inspection of Ecclesall Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 July 2013.

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 certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Your positive, can-do approach effectively underpins all the actions that the school undertakes. This means there are always improvements being made, whether to the curriculum, or the environment. Your accurate self-assessment and responsive school development plan reflects this. Governors are passionate about the school. They use the high-quality, accessible information provided and analyse this incisively. As a result, they know exactly the right questions to ask to make sure they fully understand the challenges and achievements of the school.

Most pupils make strong progress and, as a result, an increasingly significant proportion are achieving standards above those expected for their age. Behaviour is exceptionally good. Pupils are always focused on learning, because teachers make lessons interesting and fun. There are very few low-level behaviour incidents recorded and these are quickly resolved, working with the pupils and their parents. Teachers are skilled at challenging the pupils to think more deeply and critically. They are adept at knowing when to intervene, and when to allow the pupils to think

through problems on their own. However, you have already identified that there is more work to be done to ensure this happens all the time, for all pupils.

You have ensured that disruption to the school, pupils and parents has been minimal during the large-scale building works which are currently ongoing. Indeed, you have seamlessly integrated this into the curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

Parents are appreciative of the steps you take to make sure pupils are safe. They particularly welcome the drop-in sessions you organise with other professionals. Meetings with experts, such as educational psychologists and family support workers, enable them to informally talk to specialists about any concerns they may have. They also welcome the talks given by specialists regarding how to keep their children safe from abuse.

Parents and pupils are very confident that any concerns they may have will be swiftly addressed. They know that you and your senior management are always available to talk to if they have any worries.

All the relevant records and paperwork relating to safeguarding are of a high standard, and you have welcomed external agencies checking to make sure that these remain so. Governors have completed safer recruitment training, and records show that the correct processes are effectively followed.

During this period of expansion, there are extensive building works at the school. As a priority, you addressed all concerns before the contractors began work to ensure that the pupils, staff and parents were safe. Parents, spoken to during the inspection, said they were very happy about the safety of their children, and how the already effective systems had been further enhanced.

Inspection findings

- You have designed and implemented a detailed and accurate process to monitor and analyse the progress of all pupils. Within this, you can identify all pupils individually, including those very few pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. This means that you can evaluate the effectiveness of individual support plans and adapt and change these if they are not as effective as expected. The detailed analysis, undertaken by all staff, is regularly monitored and challenged by senior management. Consequently, all pupils' progress is maximised; those whose progress falters are swiftly identified, and barriers addressed. You have further refined the reporting and recording so that it is very accessible and understandable. This means that governors have a clear picture of how well the school is performing overall and, for specific groups, it enables them to clearly focus their questioning and challenge.

- Using the knowledge from this analysis, you rigorously monitor planning. Your priority is in ensuring that this accelerates learning; that interventions are effective and there is a focus on individual needs. You ensure that extension activities give opportunities for all children to master skills across the curriculum.
- The rich curriculum challenges pupils and children effectively. Writing is a strength. For instance, in the early years children write their own versions of the traditional stories, such as 'The three little pigs' and 'Goldilocks and the three bears'. They use their knowledge of the sounds letters make to spell unknown words and can explain the difference between di- and tri-graphs. By Year 1, pupils are producing high-quality extended pieces of writing. For instance, they retell their own versions of 'The gruffalo' and, in Year 2, they develop research skills to record facts about living in the Victorian era. Pupils' work across the year groups demonstrates a development of skills and understanding in science and the wider curriculum.
- Individual needs are exceptionally well met. Teachers plan to meet the individual needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and these pupils are fully included within lessons. They are very proud of their achievements and confidently share and talk about their work. For instance, they were happy to discuss their writing of a descriptive piece about Florence Nightingale, using technology to ensure success.
- There are extremely strong relationships between staff and parents. Parents, spoken to during the inspection, said how secure they felt in these relationships and know that staff will always make time to talk with them should they have any issues or questions. One parent commented that 'Communication had been brilliant!' Parents talked positively about the ideas staff have given them in how to support their children's learning at home. They were also very impressed by the invitations to be involved, from formal parents' evenings to a range of workshops. Parents welcome the sessions to work with their children during the day and at weekends, in activities such as den building, and some information-sharing directed at adults in the evenings, such as how the school teaches the curriculum and phonics. They talked about how inclusive the school was for children who have SEN and/or disabilities, and the support the school offers for the whole family.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils, at all times, try hard, love the challenge of learning and become curious, interested learners to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Dorrity
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The focus of the inspection was to check whether the good standards and provision identified at the previous inspection had been maintained and to find out how well pupils were progressing. I held a variety of meetings with you and your staff. I observed learning in seven sessions, jointly with you and your head of school. I considered a range of evidence including the school improvement plan and leaders' self-evaluation. I also reviewed other documentation.

I met with members of the governing body and spoke with the local authority advocate for learning. I considered the 94 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke with five parents. I talked with a group of pupils. I also took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.