

2 October 2018

Anthony Thomas
Headteacher
Edwalton Primary School
Wellin Lane
Edwalton
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
NG12 4AS

Dear Mr Thomas

Short inspection of Edwalton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in January 2012.

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.

Since your appointment, the leadership team, with support from the trust, has enabled Edwalton Primary School to flourish. The school is now achieving standards above those seen nationally in almost every area. Notably, more pupils now achieve the higher standards.

Teachers and teaching assistants share very high expectations for their pupils. Teaching successfully balances the consolidation of skills and ensuring that there is plenty of challenge for pupils. Regular assessments enable teachers to quickly identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Once identified, small-group, highly focused support is provided so that pupils do not fall behind in their learning.

Alongside the governors, the trust effectively holds senior leaders to account for progress. Frequent and regular reviews by a Trust Quality Assurance Officer provide high-quality challenge and support to the school leadership team. These joint school reviews are used to check on progress and help to ensure that the school remains

on track to achieve its goals. They also provide effective development opportunities for the leaders involved, some of whom are now accredited 'Specialist Leaders of Education.'

A farm, which includes lambs, chickens, goats, pigs, rabbits and several beehives, alongside a large vegetable area, offers pupils a unique range of learning opportunities. Children learn very early on in their schooling how to care for plants and animals and are extremely enthusiastic to develop these skills.

A local wooded area also provides a great outdoor learning space where children enjoy regular opportunities to learn outside. Pupils were very excited to share their learning experiences, which included using twigs to make Roman numerals and re-enacting a Viking invasion through the woods.

Edwalton Primary School offers a unique range of learning opportunities. You have correctly identified the need to further develop your school's curriculum to ensure that these real-life learning opportunities are central to pupils' learning experiences. This will provide a more relevant, rich and engaging learning experience for them in all subjects.

Since joining Flying High Trust, the school has embraced all its values. These are well understood by the pupils. The school has added sustainability as one of its personal values. Pupils spoken to were proud of this addition, with one pupil remarking, 'I am very passionate about sustainability.'

Parents are overwhelming positive about the school. With over 100 parents completing the online survey it is clear they are proud of the school and how it supports their children. One parent commented, 'My child enjoys attending Edwalton, the staff are extremely helpful and I am amazed at how well he has developed over the course of the last year or so.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Annual audits completed by the trust ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The single central record shows that checks for suitability are completed diligently for all staff. Staff have a good understanding of the processes and procedures for reporting concerns and their training included online modules on preventing radicalisation.

The school has four members of staff, including yourself, who are trained as designated safeguarding leads. You meet weekly to share concerns and to review issues shared by staff through the newly introduced safeguarding software. This secure system allows authorised members of staff to view ongoing concerns and ensure that agreed actions have been carried out.

In addition, age-appropriate assemblies on the dangers of radicalisation, alongside specific lessons on recognising and dealing with racism, help to ensure that your pupils feel safe. Furthermore, pupils have also benefited from the school's involvement in a local project on domestic violence.

Inspection findings

- With support from the trust you have improved teaching and learning in the early years. A newly developed outside space complements indoor learning space very well. It provides an extensive range of learning opportunities for pupils to develop key skills through independent and adult-led learning. A large climbing frame offers children opportunities to take risks, the water play area encourages the children to solve problems and the music and stage area allows children to explore music-making and express themselves.
- Children in the setting were highly engaged in their play and learning. They showed sustained interest in the activities and cooperated very well with each other. Adults effectively took the learning to the children and through engaging tasks and creative questioning were able to develop skills well. All attempts at learning were recognised and celebrated by the adults.
- Your new approach has helped children of all abilities make better progress. This is demonstrated in the standards achieved at the end of the early years, with standards that are now above the national average. Notable improvements can be seen in the numbers of children now achieving the higher standards.
- Disadvantaged pupils through the school make good progress. Teachers check carefully of how pupils in this group are learning compared to others. Where there is any evidence of underachievement, they provide additional teaching. Pupils value this support. One commented, 'These sessions help me to learn and are fun.'
- The positive impact of the school's approach is evident in the pupils' books and is also reflected in the school's achievement information. Significant gains in progress can be seen in Year 6 and Year 2 assessment outcomes and strong gains are clear when looking at the school's own in-year assessment information.
- The teaching of phonics is now a further strength of the school. Staff are skilled at modelling how individual sounds are blended into words. They give pupils plenty of opportunities to practise these skills. Any pupils who are struggling receive prompt support, either individually or in a small group.
- As a result of your renewed approach to the teaching of phonics, the school now achieves outcomes at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 which are above those seen nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the newly devised curriculum uses the unique range of resources in the school to further support pupils' learning and engagement across all curriculum areas.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Lakatos
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, members of your senior leadership team, governors, trust representatives, parents, pupils and teaching assistants. I sampled several lessons with your teacher who has responsibility for pupil premium children and completed a book look with your teachers who have responsibility for English and mathematics. I met with your school council to talk about their learning and explore the features which made them most proud to be a pupil at Edwalton. I took account of 101 responses from parents who completed the online survey and spoke to 12 parents at the start of the school day. I looked at a range of information, including your school improvement plan, your self-evaluation plan, lesson notes, school assessment information, monitoring and review reports, bullying and behaviour logs and the school's single central record.