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Mrs L Pickard
Headteacher
Westlands Primary School
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Dear Mrs Pickard

Short inspection of Westlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2017, 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 February 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, school leaders and governors have created a nurturing, supportive and harmonious school, where pupils can thrive academically and emotionally. You provide effective leadership and have the utmost respect of pupils, staff and parents. Leaders are determined to seek and act on advice and guidance in order to maintain a good standard of education. Governors provide support and challenge and play a crucial role in maintaining the school's overall effectiveness.

You and your subject leaders have addressed the areas identified for improvement from the previous inspection. You identified the need to improve teaching in key stage 2 so that pupils achieve standards higher than those achieved nationally. Leaders effectively hold teachers to account and carefully monitor the impact that teaching is having on learning through lesson observation and work scrutiny. This clear focus on high-quality teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in key stage 2.

Pupils' achievement in mathematics in key stage 2 has improved because pupils have frequent opportunities to apply their learning to problem solving. Pupils' achievement in writing in key stage 2 has improved because teachers provide good models of well-constructed sentences and work with pupils in lessons to improve their work. Pupils' achievement in reading is improving. However, pupils'

comprehension skills need further development in order for them to make similarly high progress to that in writing and mathematics. You have correctly identified this.

Achievement in key stage 1 in writing has dipped this year because there is not a consistent approach to teaching writing across this key stage. Expectations are not consistently high enough so pupils did not achieve as well last year.

Pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. The pupils I spoke to during the inspection showed great respect and are proud of their school. They say that everyone plays together and gets on well. Pupils say that teachers help them at lunchtime and breaktime if they need additional support. You provide effective support to enable disadvantaged groups to make accelerated progress in their learning. As a result, these pupils achieve well by the time they leave school.

The parents that I spoke to and those who responded to Ofsted's online survey say that they find staff approachable. Parents are particularly pleased with how well staff keep them updated about their children's progress and school life. The half-termly newsletters provide timely information, which parents appreciate. They say that their children are happy at school and that teachers encourage children to be independent.

Governors have a good understanding of pupils' progress. The teaching and learning committee analyse and review attainment and progress, providing challenge and support in governing body meetings. They are aware of the key areas for development.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all the safeguarding arrangements comply with statutory guidance. You monitor safeguarding records effectively. Pre-recruitment checks on the suitability of all staff are carried out and reviewed regularly. All staff are appropriately trained.

Pupils are kept safe and feel safe in school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare, so referrals are timely and outside agencies are used appropriately.

The school teaches pupils how to stay safe in and out of school, including online. Pupils say that discriminatory behaviour, including bullying, is rare. They say that you deal with any problems or bullying if it occurs. This is reflected in the few incidents of inappropriate behaviour as evidenced in school behaviour logs. The 22 parents who responded Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children feel happy and safe in school.

Inspection findings

- School leaders work closely with groups of parents and pupils to encourage more

regular attendance. The attendance clinics have helped to raise attendance. You work with external agencies to provide additional support, which is increasing attendance for vulnerable groups of pupils. You actively promote high attendance and discourage families from taking holiday in term time.

- In response to the outcomes of teachers' assessments at key stage 2 in 2016, leaders identified pupils of average ability and disadvantaged pupils as groups who required additional support. The school has effective monitoring systems to track the progress of these pupils. Where necessary, additional adult support and teaching has been provided to accelerate progress. Your current assessment information shows that this work has been effective in improving rates of progress in all subjects for these pupils. Furthermore, your work is ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils are now on track to meet the expected standard in forthcoming years.
- In key stage 2, a range of effective strategies to improve mathematics is resulting in better rates of progress. Pupils now achieve standards higher than those achieved nationally. Pupils are able to readily access new resources to help them develop their independence and problem-solving skills.
- Robust assessment and monitoring of writing ensure that teachers and school leaders have an accurate view of progress and achievement in this subject. Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in developing their writing skills in key stage 2. However, their handwriting is not of a consistently high standard.
- The number of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 has fallen this year. Leaders have not acted swiftly enough on the information gained from monitoring in order to improve outcomes in writing by the end of key stage 1. The inconsistent approach to teaching writing in key stage 1 has contributed to fewer pupils achieving the national standard in writing this year.
- Pupils' handwriting skills are not developed well enough as they move through the school. The school does not have a consistent approach to developing these skills. As a result, letters are poorly formed and pupils change between printed and joined writing styles. Work is often untidy in some classes and there are not consistently high enough expectations of standards of handwriting and presentation in the school.
- The overall proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the Reception class has exceeded the standards achieved nationally year on year. The school ensures that these pupils make accelerated progress as they join key stage 1 so that they achieve the required standard in the phonics reading check. The number of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics reading check has been consistently above the standards achieved nationally over the past three years.
- Learning journey books are used in the Reception Year to capture the progress that children make over time. Work in these books demonstrates that children's skills are developed through a wide range of activities across the curriculum. Adults are well trained and the setting is well led by an experienced early years leader.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a consistent approach to teaching handwriting is developed so that pupils can develop a fluent joined script and take pride in the presentation of their work
- adults support pupils to fully understand what they have read and so promote a deeper understanding in reading
- teaching in key stage 1 enables pupils to make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and 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 Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Blackburn
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the start of the inspection I met with the headteacher to review the school's own self-evaluation and school development plan. During our discussions we agreed several key lines of enquiry.

I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher and with middle leaders. I also considered 22 responses from the parent survey and staff questionnaires. I met with parents at the school gate and discussed with pupils the extent to which they felt safe and their views on learning and behaviour.

I held a discussion with the local authority's representative and members of the governing body. I considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website. I reviewed the school's single central record and an analysis of attendance information.

I visited classes to observe learning and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in writing. I looked at children's learning journeys in the Reception class. I listened to a group of pupils reading their work in Year 2.