

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



14 December 2015

Miss Phillippa McPherson
Acting Headteacher
Westhouses Primary School
Bolden Terrace
Westhouses
Alfreton
Derbyshire
DE55 5AF

Dear Miss McPherson

Short inspection of Westhouses Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 November 2015, 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team have created a positive learning environment where pupils feel valued and enjoy their learning. Pupils are motivated to earn merits and look forward to celebration assemblies on Fridays to find out who are the 'superstars' for each year group. As a result, pupils listen well in lessons and are currently making good progress.

Pupils enjoy learning and are particularly enthused about their topics. In Class 2, pupils have baked and evaluated different types of bread as part of their 'scrumdiddlyumptious' topic. In Class 1, pupils wrote their own novel recipes after reading *George's Marvellous Medicine*, which included bags of bones and red paint. The older pupils told me that they enjoyed designing and making Egyptian masks using paper-mâché and writing a newspaper report following Howard Carter's discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. One pupil's headline was, 'King Tut's Tomb found'.

You are successfully leading the school during the transition period between the previous headteacher leaving and new headteacher starting in January 2016. You have quite rightly focused on improving teaching and learning. As a result of your

monitoring and evaluations, teaching has improved and most pupils are making good progress in their learning. You have received good support from the local authority representative in your new role and the governors are fully supportive of your leadership and appreciate your hard work.

At the previous inspection, the inspector asked leaders to ensure that the pace of learning is consistently good or better and that the older pupils know what their targets are to improve their work. Teaching has improved and during the inspection we saw pupils who were motivated and eager to learn in lessons. No time was wasted and pupils were conscientious in their work and learning well. In addition, older pupils could tell me their targets for their work and were working well to achieve them.

You and your team have correctly identified that the teaching and learning of mathematics needs to improve. The new mathematics coordinator has a plan of action and is implementing it successfully. The new visual calculation policy, which is helping pupils to set out their calculations more easily, has successfully supported pupils' learning in lessons this term. However, more work is required to improve pupils' mathematical problem solving and reasoning skills.

I have asked you to review the action planning in school to set more precise, measurable targets by which leaders and governors can accurately judge if actions taken have been successful or not. In addition, I have also asked you to focus on improving pupils' punctuation in their writing and to improve the presentation of pupils' work.

Safeguarding is effective.

You lead safeguarding well in school. Your training log shows that staff have attended a wide range of safeguarding courses and are up to date with the latest government requirements. You work well with a range of outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Records are detailed and securely stored. You keep governors regularly updated on safeguarding practice and involved the Chair of Governors in the annual safeguarding audit. As a result, governors have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils behave well in school and analysis of behaviour records shows only a few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils tell me that bullying is rare and that when pupils fall out, teachers and teaching assistants sort out problems quickly. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when they are on the internet. Pupils' attendance is high and is consistently above the national average. This term, disadvantaged pupils have rarely missed a day's education.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have observed lessons and monitored teachers' planning and pupils' books in detail to provide the next steps for teachers to improve their

practice. School staff have visited other schools to observe good practice and the newly qualified teacher has attended appropriate training. As a result, teaching has improved and pupils' learning has accelerated.

- Governors come into school to check how well the school is implementing actions on the school improvement plan. A recent visit involved the monitoring of pupils' usage of computer tablets. Governors reported that pupils were successfully learning about programming and completing mathematical puzzles to move learning forward. After each visit, governors report back to the full governing body and any recommendations are checked at the subsequent meeting. However, governors recognise that they need to challenge school leaders more about the organisation of the school and are working with the local authority representative to sharpen their questioning.
- Leaders have identified that mathematics is a key area for improvement. Teachers have shared the expectations outlined in the National Curriculum with parents. Parents came into school to watch mathematics lessons and to look at pupils' work and gained an insight into the standard of work expected. The new mathematics leader has worked with a local authority consultant to develop the teaching of mathematics. As a result, a visual calculation policy is displayed in all classrooms and pupils are using it well to help them set out their calculations. The mathematics leader has recognised that pupils' mathematical problem solving and reasoning skills are underdeveloped.
- The school has a caring, family ethos. Pupils feel well supported by caring teachers and teaching assistants. One pupil told me, 'Everyone is there for each other'. The school helps pupils to understand their own emotional well-being. In Class 1, pupils were asked what makes them relaxed and what makes them stressed. Adults support pupils to alleviate their anxieties. In Class 3, pupils were asked to reflect on things that they were proud of. One pupil wrote that they were proud to be taking part in the school's 'golden mile' running club.
- Most pupils, when they start school, are working below age-related expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils are broadly in line with the national average for all subjects. Therefore, the progress pupils make through the school is good. Pupils have achieved very well in writing. In 2015, writing assessments at the end of Year 6 were above the national average. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to write in many different genres, including poetry. However, scrutiny of current pupils' work shows that pupils do not consistently join their handwriting in Key Stage 2 and pupils do not always correctly punctuate their sentences. I have asked you and your team to focus on improving this area of pupils' work.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress through the school and there are few gaps between their and other pupils' achievements in the school. The school carefully targets the pupil premium funding to support

pupils' learning and reduce any underachievement. Leaders closely track all pupils and intervention strategies are put in place to support learning. As a result, most pupils are achieving at age-related expectations.

- Pupils have a thirst for learning and can talk enthusiastically about the curriculum and the subjects they have studied. They particularly enjoy the trips linked to their topics. Pupils recalled their visit to the House of Commons where they learnt about how laws are made and the trip to Eureka where they discovered the speed of a human sneeze. Older pupils have improved their geography skills by studying the difference between the Arctic and Antarctic.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are challenged to develop their skills in all the different areas of learning, both inside and outside the classroom. Children have baked their own colourful playdough buns to sell in the 'sticky bun cake shop'. The teaching assistant skilfully asked the children to sell different amount of buns to develop their counting skills. Outside, children were investigating the capacity of different containers. As a consequence of good teaching, children are making good progress in the early years.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibilities given to them. The sports crew play with younger pupils and help organise sports day. The pupil voice group were involved in interviewing the new headteacher and have started a superband reward scheme for pupils who are respectful around school. As a result, pupils are friendly towards each other and respectful to all adults.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- action planning has clear, measurable success criteria linked to pupil progress, to help judge if the actions taken have been successful
- pupils' achievement in mathematics improves, particularly for the most-able pupils, by developing their mathematical skills to reason and problem solve
- pupils' punctuation and handwriting improves.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Derbyshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Finch

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met you, the new leader for mathematics, a representative from the local authority and two governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. We carried out a joint observation and I observed you giving feedback to the teacher. In addition, I visited every classroom, spoke to pupils and reviewed pupils' work in books. I spoke to parents on the playground and observed pupils at breaktime. We viewed records about keeping pupils safe. I scrutinised the school improvement plan, attendance records, behaviour logs and performance management documentation. We considered the 25 responses from Parent View. At the end of the day I gave feedback to you, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and the headteacher designate.