

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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



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Miss Julie Wardle
Carlton Central Junior School
Garden Avenue
Foxhill Road
Carlton
Nottingham
NG4 1QT

Dear Miss Wardle

Short inspection of Carlton Central Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2016, 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 November 2010.

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 sustained a positive and visible culture of success that is summed up by the school's motto, 'we grow greatness'. You and your senior leaders, along with governors, know the strengths of the school very well. Despite being an unquestionably good school, you, senior leaders, staff and governors are relentless in the aspiration to become even better. This admirable quality means that you do not rest for a moment. You are quick to note any issues that may arise, or where progress is not fast enough, and you act decisively to address matters. You have written a highly effective action plan to focus precisely on what needs to happen so that your school can become outstanding.

While governors support both you and your staff strongly, they also hold you all to account rigorously for the decisions you take and for the outcomes of pupils. You, in turn, welcome this because you understand that their scrutiny and attention to detail help ensure that the impacts of your actions are effective.

All groups of pupils make good progress at your school. Last year, the proportions of pupils who made the progress expected of them, and more than the progress expected of them, were above those nationally. Information you showed me during my visit confirms that progress for pupils currently in the school remains good. Most pupils are working at least at the standards expected for their age in all subjects, and considerable proportions are working beyond them. These proportions are increasing over time. You are acutely aware that, in a small number of areas, the

gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school have not yet closed. You are taking action to address this.

Carlton Central Junior School is highly inclusive. You and your staff welcome pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, and cater particularly well for the large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. The good progress of these pupils is due to the caring nature of staff, who share a belief that every child has great potential and that they can, and will, succeed. High-quality teaching for these pupils is enhanced by very good support from teaching assistants. You are ensuring that staff develop these pupils' independence and allow them to learn well.

You have dealt effectively with the area for improvement identified at the last inspection. At this time, inspectors judged that staff needed to ensure that most pupils reached the higher National Curriculum level in writing. Published information shows that last year a higher proportion of pupils reached the higher levels than seen nationally. You are continuing to ensure that as many as possible of the most-able pupils reach the highest standards.

Classrooms are effective learning environments where relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Pupils listen carefully to what adults teach them, and they complete their work well. Because of teachers' good subject knowledge, pupils learn effectively. In one class we visited, pupils were using terms such as 'denominator' and 'numerator' confidently, for example, in helping them to calculate two-thirds of twelve. Pupils' exercise books that I looked at during my visit confirm that their progress and attainment is good in all year groups. For example, pupils in Year 5 had recently learned about relative clauses, and were using these accurately to improve their writing. One pupil had written, 'The Queen, who has several castles, is one of the richest women in the world.'

The pupils I met during my visit told me how much they enjoy coming to school. They say that staff are very good at giving them extra help if they do not understand something. They behave well around the school and support each other in lessons. They told me proudly how they keep their classrooms very tidy, in the hope of winning the 'Golden Dustpan' award for the cleanest class. Pupils learn about fundamental British values effectively and are respectful of others different from themselves. They feel that staff listen to their opinions, and they value the elections to the 'Carlton Cabinet', where pupils have responsibilities for aspects such as homework and health and safety.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an exceptionally strong culture of vigilance in your school, which comes from the absolute priority to do everything possible to minimise the risk of harm to any pupil. Staff understand the warning signs of potential abuse and are highly trained, including in areas of recent national concern, such as extremism.

You and senior leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements, including the school's single central record and staff recruitment procedures, are fit for purpose. During my visit, I looked at a sample of the records you keep. These are detailed

and of a meticulous quality, and show that you are unafraid to make referrals to outside agencies wherever the need arises.

Pupils I met during my visit told me that they feel very safe in school, and that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils were particularly keen to tell me the 'worry box' in each classroom was a good way of letting adults know if they have any concern. Pupils say that they can approach any member of staff directly if they are worried about something. They told me how the school helps protect them by telling them about a range of risks they may face when using the internet or mobile phones, or from strangers.

Inspection findings

- The school's leadership is a strength. Leaders set out a precise vision that empowers pupils to 'become citizens of the future' by ensuring that they leave well prepared for secondary school with good levels of skills and attitudes to learning and respect for others. The leaders' self-evaluation document is highly detailed and gives convincing and accurate reasons why the school is good. You, as the headteacher, are a highly respected professional who is helping other schools, which are currently judged inadequate, to improve.
- Your school development plan shows that leaders are focusing their energies on the right priorities. Action taken already has had an impressive impact. For example, last year specific groups of pupils were becoming persistently absent and had low attendance. Using an attendance officer, you have worked with families and provided highly effective reward schemes to improve attendance for those pupils who do not attend regularly enough. As a result, persistent absence has reduced and is currently below the national average. Attendance for those groups, and pupils overall, is now above the national average. You are continuing your focus on attendance to ensure that it remains high.
- Pupils make good levels of progress in all subjects. Attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling, where pupils have previously attained less well than in other areas, is now rising because teachers are ensuring that pupils learn these skills effectively.
- Most of the gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils in the school and others are narrowing. However, teachers' accurate assessments have shown that they are not yet closing in reading and writing in Year 5, and in reading in Year 6. Leaders have made the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils a priority in their development plan, and are intensifying the support that staff provide in these areas.
- The most-able pupils attain slightly more highly than similar pupils nationally, and their progress is good overall. Last year, they made similar progress to other high-achieving children in reading, slightly more in writing and considerably more progress in mathematics. Nevertheless, leaders have ambitious plans to drive outcomes up further. They are improving teaching in Years 3 and 4, where progress for the most-able pupils is not yet rapid, by

ensuring that teachers plan precisely so that these pupils receive work that consistently challenges them and makes them think deeply.

- Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire were unreservedly positive about the school and its high aspiration for pupils. They feel very well led and managed. Staff confirm that the school is continuing to improve and say that they are treated fairly and with respect.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, expressed very positive views about the school. A large majority would recommend the school to others and all said that their child was safe and happy. A very large majority believe that pupils make good progress. Those I met at the end of the day told me that their children are well taught, and that staff are very approachable. One parent described the school as 'like a big family' and another told me how her child's particular needs were being very well met since they had joined the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the remaining gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school close quickly.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Roary Pownall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other senior leaders and members of the governing body. I looked at the range of views expressed by staff, through Ofsted's questionnaire, about the school and its leadership. We visited all classes to observe teaching and learning. I examined pupils' written work across the school. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and met with groups of them at breaktime and lunchtime. I considered the views of 17 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, alongside the school's most recent questionnaire. I also met with parents at the end of the school day. I read a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, your school development plan and information on outcomes for pupils currently in the school. I visited the breakfast club, which is maintained by the governing body, to check that pupils were safe. I studied information related to attendance, anonymised examples of teachers' appraisal and examined safeguarding records and policies.