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Mrs B Giles
Headteacher
Lower Wortley Primary School
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Dear Mrs Giles

Short inspection of Lower Wortley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 May 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 March 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 deputy headteacher have promoted a clear vision for sustained improvement which is shared by a well-led and highly motivated team of teachers. You have given additional responsibilities to senior and middle leaders and this has increased their ability to check standards and steer improvement. However, the quality of this is not consistent across all middle leaders. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupil progress are now much stronger. As a result, teachers are able to plan more effectively to meet pupils' needs and intervene to address underperformance. This is leading to improving rates of progress across the school.

You and other leaders have an accurate view of the school's current performance and where you need to take action in order to secure further improvement. By setting performance management targets to improve the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, you have raised expectations and the accountability of teachers for the progress of pupils in their classrooms. These high expectations are shared by governors who work with external partners to enhance the actions they take to hold leaders to account. You have balanced challenge with good-quality professional development and opportunities for teachers to work in partnership with colleagues from other schools to develop a clearer awareness of standards. This promotion of an open learning culture, where teachers are actively sharing lesson plans and wider good practice, is helping to improve the quality of teaching.

As well as addressing areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection, including increasing pace in lessons, you and other leaders have relentlessly pursued ongoing improvement. You have introduced creative innovations to provide stronger links between talk and writing and these are increasing pupils' understanding of different types of texts and improving the quality of pupils' writing. New assessment systems are leading to more effective marking that is making pupils act upon the feedback they receive and as a result they are making better progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' welfare lies at the heart of the school's activities and rigorous actions are taken by leaders and teachers to promote pupils' safety. Senior leaders and governors take their responsibilities very seriously and recently commissioned an independent review of safeguarding which commended many aspects of the school's practice. Teachers and governors receive up-to-date training on a range of key safeguarding issues. Pupils are able to discuss how the school has made them aware of potential hazards, such as online threats and the dangers of alcohol. Both parents and pupils agree that pupils feel safe at school. Actions to promote safety are supported by external agencies, including the police and the prison service. The school works assiduously with a wide range of partners, including the targeted services leader, to support the welfare of children.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have shown an ability to address many of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Lesson introductions are now crisper and pupils move on to tasks with greater pace and purpose. In mathematics, there was evidence in books that once pupils had mastered a skill, they progressed to more complex problems, without wading through unnecessary questions. Leaders have promoted actions to improve attendance, which is now above the national average. Their actions to discourage parents from taking pupils on holidays in term time has halved the days lost to this in the current academic year.
- The quality of teaching is improving. Well-planned activities in English encouraged pupils to engage with challenging grammatical terms and use them in their own writing. Teachers modelled tasks clearly and used questions to check understanding and probe deeper thinking. Pupils were confident to respond as teachers valued and encouraged their contributions. Teachers have high expectations and these are reflected in well-presented books, showing that pupils take pride in their accomplishments. On occasions, some tasks are supported by too many prompts that can limit independence and boys are not always focused in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) lessons.
- Leaders have acted to improve provision and outcomes for key groups. The good progress that pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making in key stage 2 is being supported by their improving progress in the early years and in the key stage 1 phonics test. The school provides well-matched provision for pupils who have special educational needs that has enabled them over time to make better progress than their peers, as shown in their key stage 2 reading and writing outcomes in 2014 and mathematics in 2015. Under the school's new assessment

system, these children continue to make good progress. Throughout key stage 2, the most able pupils are performing at levels that will enable them to surpass expected standards.

- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum that combines creative approaches to topic work with more formal learning opportunities to develop key skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils have access to a wide range of sports coaching and competitions and they are actively involved in musical and drama activities. All pupils participate in the school pantomime, however small their role, reflecting the school's strong inclusive ethos. Extra-curricular provision is strong, with the majority of pupils participating in the activities on offer.
- While standards in the early years have been historically lower than those achieved nationally, leaders are acting to improve provision and accelerate progress. Thorough planning, close attention to children's needs and interests and close monitoring are leading to improving outcomes for all children.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. As teaching is stimulating and well planned, pupils engage with tasks productively and offer constructive advice on one another's work. Pupils are consistently polite and courteous and show respect for one another and adults. They value the care and commitment of their teachers and reflect these values in their own behaviour. The actions taken at all levels to support the personal, social and emotional development of pupils are extremely strong. You and your team create meaningful links with parents that help to support pupils' progress and development.
- The team ethos created by school leaders is a real strength of the school. Teachers, pupils and parents value the example set by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have established a motivated and committed team of teachers who are monitoring performance with increasing rigour and share clear ambition for the continued academic and wider personal development of all of the children at the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in the early years are accelerated so that a higher proportion of pupils achieve a good level of development
- recent developments in teaching, assessment and the curriculum are securely implemented to further improve rates of progress
- the skills and experiences of middle leaders are enhanced to enable them to further check standards and lead improvements in the quality of teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Kirtley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a range of senior and middle leaders. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority and the chair of governors on the telephone. I talked to a group of pupils at lunchtime and discussed aspects of their work in visits to lessons. I undertook learning walks with the headteacher and deputy headteacher across the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. I examined the school improvement plan as well as other documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information on current progress, attendance information and pupil tracking and intervention documents. I also examined safeguarding documents, including the single central record and the recently commissioned local authority safeguarding audit. I took into account 33 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, 14 free text responses, a parental letter and telephone call, 60 responses to the online pupils' questionnaire and 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.