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Mr Dominic Cook
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Dear Mr Cook

Short inspection of Westende Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 9 June 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 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. You tackle improvements effectively, ensuring that the quality of teaching and the use of assessment are strong and improving further. Governors recognise that the pace of improvement has increased under your leadership, resulting in good outcomes for pupils. Staff understand your vision for the school and work well as a team. Parents are positive about the pastoral care afforded to pupils at Westende. Parents say they would welcome even more frequent information about the progress of their children. However, as judged by a representative sample of their comments, their children are 'thriving' and developing a 'fabulous attitude to learning'.

Pupils begin the school well placed to succeed. Leaders do not, however, leave any pupil, particularly the most able, treading water. On the contrary, they ensure that teaching builds carefully on the skills pupils have when they start the school, strengthening weaker aspects and building on strong areas. Leaders provide well-targeted training for staff, mentoring new teachers well so that they make a successful start to their teaching careers. Pupils show focus and respect for their teachers, behaving impeccably during all of the sessions visited during the inspection. Pupils say the majority of their peers are considerate of others during learning and play and enjoy making their contribution to building a happy, safe school through leadership roles, such as peer mediators.

Teachers are given regular opportunities to work together to assess how well pupils

are doing. Leaders regularly check the performance of pupils individually and know how well groups of pupils are achieving over time because the information systems in the school are clear and informative. The attainment of pupils at the school has remained better than average since the last inspection, with more pupils achieving higher levels than found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in 2015. Although some pupils last year did not make the progress they should have in mathematics, current information is very positive for the proportions of pupils making expected or better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to raise attainment in writing, particularly for more able pupils. Inspectors also asked leaders to develop a more detailed picture of pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Leaders have tackled these areas effectively so that:

- the most able pupils routinely use research and wider reading to inform their writing and regularly take opportunities to edit, refine and redraft their ideas so that the final versions are of a high standard
- teachers engage pupils in lively conversation about the choices they are making when they write so that the language used is of higher calibre and interest for readers
- there is an accurate information system which is understood and used well by all staff to show pupils' starting points and the current progress they are making.

Pupils' books show that occasionally pupils' attention is not focused quickly on ways they could make their writing even better during lessons so that progress is slower than it could be.

Although pupils' behaviour during the inspection was exemplary, aspects of their personal development, such as knowledge about a range of faiths, cultures and traditions wider than their own, have not been fully capitalised on within the curriculum. Curriculum leaders are at an early stage of mapping all of the opportunities available for pupils and consequently pupils' current knowledge is patchy.

The work of governors, while effective, relies heavily on information provided by the headteacher. There have been some recent lapses in the statutory reporting of information on the website while the headteacher has been undertaking an executive headteacher role in the local authority.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders take safeguarding seriously and ensure that staff receive regular training. Senior leaders hold recently updated and relevant qualifications. Pupils have a good understanding of the risks associated with accessing or sharing information online and other risks to their personal safety. Attendance is high at the school because leaders set high expectations and provide sensitive support to any families who find it difficult to get their children to school as regularly as they should.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All current policies reflect the most recent national guidance and leaders have a clear grasp of their duties, such as keeping pupils safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. There are regular training audits to make sure staff have all the information they need to keep pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- Since the previous inspection in January 2012, you have maintained a committed focus to improving teaching and achievement. You have ignited other leaders' determination to succeed further and empowered them to lead when you are supporting leaders in other schools within the locality.
- You provide clear direction and focus in future planning and your vision is understood by the school community. Skilled teachers support your work and this has increased the pace and success of actions that are taken.
- Many parents praise the school for the contribution that is made to the pupils' personal and academic development. They feel that staff know their children very well. They appreciate their children being fully prepared for the academic rigour of the secondary curriculum and are proud that their children make a successful start to Year 7.
- Teachers are well supported by senior leaders in developing their practice. New and experienced colleagues work together regularly to share ideas and consider what works well for the pupils they teach.
- Information about pupils' achievement is understood and used to plan learning for individuals, groups and classes. Staff are ambitious for all pupils, focusing closely on pupils who need additional help and support and providing suitable extension for the most able. Teachers know they are expected to account for the difference their teaching makes to pupils' progress.
- Governors are good advocates and play an active part in the life of the school, visiting regularly. Governors' evaluation, however, is heavily reliant on leaders' reporting rather than their own independent evaluation of what they are presented with.
- Achievement overall is good. The vast majority of pupils make the progress that is expected of them or do better, including those pupils who are disadvantaged. Pupils who have special educational needs or disability supported through the Acorn Centre make good progress from their starting points because of the skilled support they receive during their lessons in the main school.
- Teaching across key stage 2 has a number of successful characteristics. Explanations are grounded in accurate subject knowledge and questions posed enable pupils to think deeply. Teachers hold high expectations of all pupils.
- This was shown well in a Year 3 mathematics lesson where pupils were researching, presenting and analysing data. Pupils independently sourced and recorded information, surveying their peers. They created accurate and well-presented graphs, explaining to me why they had to take care with scales and labelling. Their analysis focused closely on pertinent patterns and

trends in the information such as 'frequency'. The speed of their work and the quality produced was linked closely to the high expectations set by their teacher.

- In a Year 5 English lesson, the most able pupils were researching and composing a letter to the Queen. They used formal language appropriately, manipulated sentence structures to gain the best effect on the reader and added selected details from their research to enliven their letters.
- Pupils in need of additional support receive structured, focused help to improve their skills. Teacher intervention has high impact on the quality of pupils' subsequent work. In one group, pupils were discussing their thinking prior to writing. The teacher gave time for a pupil to try and incorporate their chosen word 'beautiful' into their sentence start. They worked through a number of options, considering each in the sentence. Their final construction 'the next beautiful morning' enhanced their writing very effectively.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school during the inspection was exemplary. Pupils were keen to learn in lessons, maintained focus and showed high levels of respect and courtesy for adults and other pupils. Pupils who spoke to me said there were very few incidents of poor behaviour. The wider pupil survey supports this view.
- There are a number of opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills in the local community. Initiatives such as 'dementia friends' and 'junior wardens' are examples of this. Pupils in Year 5 have also recently submitted applications for the post of 'Mini Mayor' to support the local mayor. The school council's recent visit to the Houses of Parliament to look at democracy in action has strengthened their understanding of this British value.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding are fully exploited across the curriculum so that pupils develop excellent knowledge of these areas
- all statutory information on the website is regularly reviewed and updated and independent evaluation of the impact of leaders' actions is undertaken more regularly by governors
- teaching consistently focuses pupils' attention promptly on ways in which they could make their writing even better.

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

Yours sincerely

Abbie Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, pupils and three governors including the chair of the governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I visited classes across all year groups in the school with yourself and senior leaders. I reviewed samples of pupils' work in writing across key stage 2. I took account of 15 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 57 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered 57 responses by pupils to their online survey. I spoke with a group of pupils from across the school. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' current performance, the school improvement plan, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and safeguarding policies and procedures. I reviewed leaders' correspondence with parents and records of behaviour. I discussed your own evaluation of the school's performance with you.