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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Lee Hurling
Executive Headteacher
Rothwell Victoria Infant School
School Lane
Rothwell
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN14 6HZ

Dear Mr Hurling

Short inspection of Rothwell Victoria Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since its predecessor school's last inspection.

You and your leadership team work effectively together to provide good leadership to the staff team. You demonstrate a resolute commitment to raising standards in the school and are well supported by the executive deputy headteacher, the deputy headteacher and head of learning and teaching. As a team, you have a sound knowledge of your school's strengths and areas for development.

The parental community is very positive about the school. Every parent who replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said their child was happy and well looked after at your school. As one parent put it, 'I am delighted to have this opportunity to celebrate the successes of Rothwell Victoria Infant School... the school strikes a perfect balance between a modern and well-researched approach to education as well as valuing traditional community and family values.'

Pupils are very happy at your school. During the inspection, the pupils were clearly engaged in and enjoying their learning. In a Year 1 class, pupils were absorbed in describing their favourite chocolates. Their descriptions were

detailed and very tempting. Pupils spoke confidently about their learning and were very keen to share their writing because they were extremely proud of it.

You and your team have worked hard to develop and refine the quality of teaching and learning. Adults work well as a team to ensure there is consistency and equality of provision in different classes within year groups. Pupils in every class receive the same good-quality support and care. As a result, over time, pupils make good progress in learning. Throughout the school, there is a positive ethos of learning and pupils are happy to be at school. The learning environment is bright and tidy and reflects the pupils' achievements throughout the school. During the inspection, the very youngest children could not wait to come into nursery. Just before the doors opened at the beginning of the day there were a number of little noses pressed up against the windows as they waited in anticipation to find out what the day would bring.

You have helped the pupils to develop their own understanding of how well they are learning. Pupils regularly think carefully about whether they have achieved their learning targets and rate their achievements using their own marking system. During the inspection, a group of Reception children were sitting with their teacher marking each other's writing. Children had a hat that identified what they were looking for. One was looking for capital letters; another was looking for the spelling of 'tricky' words. The children were very accurate in their assessment of how well each child was doing. A child who was checking capital letters said, 'No that's not right, you don't put a capital letter at the end of a word.' This demonstrated how well the children understood their tasks. The children had clearly made good progress in their understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. The same good-quality assessment was seen in all the classrooms visited. It is having a significant impact on the good progress pupils make in your school.

You and your team carefully track the progress of your pupils. You have implemented a new assessment system and coped well with the difficulties this presented at first in tracking pupils' progress. This limited your effectiveness in setting improvement targets for different groups of pupils. However, you have resolved these difficulties. Consequently, senior leaders now have a clear understanding of how well each pupil is doing. You and your senior team regularly meet with teachers to check the progress of pupils. You identify support for pupils quickly if you find they are not on track to meet their learning targets. However, you do not always set time-limited targets for improvement. This can slow how quickly pupils get 'back on track' again if their learning slows.

In 2015, disadvantaged children in the early years did not do as well as their peers in the listening and attention, making relationships and reading strands of the early years learning goals. The gaps between their achievement and that of their peers in school were wider than gaps between disadvantaged pupils nationally and their peers. The school's current data shows this gap in reading has closed considerably in Year 1. In the 2015 statutory tests at the end of

Year 2, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their peers in school in mathematics, reading and writing. Current school data and the work in pupils' books suggest there is still a gap but that it is narrowing. You and your senior team are acting with urgency to close the gaps through carefully targeted additional teaching and the introduction of further adult support directed to meet disadvantaged pupils' learning needs. This has met with some success this year. In the early years in 2016, the gaps between disadvantaged children and their peers have closed considerably across all seven early learning goals.

Members of the governing body visit the school regularly to check the quality of pupils' learning and progress. Governors utilise the skills they use in their everyday lives to support school leaders to improve the provision at the school. Governors are fully committed to ensuring high standards at the school. They know the assessment information well and use this to challenge school leaders to improve outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the governors place a high priority on safeguarding. You have organised your staffing arrangements to ensure that a senior leader is responsible for ensuring that children and families have the support they need should they encounter difficulties. You have ensured that all staff have regular child protection training appropriate to their roles within school. Governors have also ensured that staff have received training on radicalisation and extremism. You have ensured that your staff are paediatric first aid trained as well. Your senior leader keeps careful and chronological records of any actions relating to child protection. You and senior leaders hold regular meetings to check that pupils in need of help are receiving the appropriate support either through school or through support from an external agency. Systems for identifying concerns are clear and followed by all your staff. You carefully analyse the attendance of different groups of pupils. In order to ensure that pupils attend, you and the governors have provided support above and beyond that normally expected. Parents agree that their children are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of learning and teaching at the school. They use this information to plan for further improvements to the quality of teaching so that pupils achieve more. Leaders' plans for improvement link clearly to their analysis of assessment information. However, plans lack precision in their targets for improvement. This limits the effectiveness of senior leaders and year group leaders in holding their colleagues to account for their work.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 and Level 3 in mathematics, reading and writing was at or slightly above the national average. Boys' attainment was below girls' attainment in all three subjects. However, current school assessment information shows that the gaps between boys' and girls' attainment in reading and mathematics have

closed. A gap remains between boys' attainment in writing and girls' attainment. Leaders have identified this gap and have put plans in place to address this. In 2016, the school's assessment data suggests the majority of pupils will reach the expected standard, particularly in mathematics and reading.

- Leaders track the progress of pupils carefully. Where pupils fall behind, leaders act quickly to put plans in place to meet pupils' needs. Year group leaders support their colleagues to identify the support pupils need to improve their learning. The school has a variety of in-class support and small group teaching which focus on pupils' learning needs. However, school systems do not allow year group leaders to go back quickly enough to check the effectiveness of the support. As a result, time is sometimes wasted before pupils make the rapid progress needed to catch up to where they should be.
- Current school assessment information and work in pupils' books shows that from their starting points pupils make good progress in learning in mathematics, reading and for the most part in writing. The most able pupils have their learning needs met appropriately through work that challenges their thinking and deepens their understanding of concepts. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress in learning from their different starting points.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide well-planned activities with clear targets for learning. During a Year 2 writing lesson, pupils were assessing their success in meeting the learning goals identified by their teacher. One particular pupil could be heard saying, 'Yes, I did use a contraction in my work, but oh! I didn't use an adverb.' Pupils communicate their views about their learning to their teachers through diagrams and smiley faces. Teachers follow the school's policy on marking and feedback. For example, one pupil said, 'If it's in pink, I know I have to think about making my work better.' This is proving effective in supporting pupils to think more deeply about what they are learning and supports the good progress they make.
- Leaders track the attendance of pupils carefully. The school's published attendance data shows that pupils' attendance is below the national average. This is because a small group of pupils is consistently absent. Leaders are making strenuous efforts to ensure that all pupils attend school every day. They can point to some notable successes where their actions to improve the attendance of individual pupils have secured better progress in the pupils' learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to others as a place of learning and care. For the most part, pupils present their work well and demonstrate pride in their achievements. Pupils' behaviour around school is good. Pupils socialise well together and support each other when learning.
- The early years is a bright and happy environment. The outdoor area provides children with a wealth of different experiences to develop their learning across all the early learning goals. For example, opportunities to

explore the wooded area and think about insects and plants help them to grow in knowledge about the world around them. Children play and learn well together and gain skills in managing their own needs well. Assessment information suggests that the number of children reaching a good level of development in 2016 will be slightly above the national average for last year. From starting points which are below those typically seen for their age, this represents good progress in the children's learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans for improvement have precise, measurable targets so that leaders at all levels are able to hold their colleagues to account for the learning and progress of pupils
- the remaining attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closed as quickly as possible
- year group leaders check the impact of planned support for pupils with more urgency so that they take action quickly if the support is ineffective in raising the attainment of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Jan Connor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the executive deputy headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the head of teaching and learning, the special educational needs leader and the home/school partnership leader. I met with three members of the governing body. I also met with the primary representative of the Montsaye Community Learning Partnership and an external consultant who works for the partnership. I toured the school visiting many classrooms to observe teaching, to speak with pupils and to look at their work in their books. I observed pupils' behaviour both in class and around the school. I considered a range of school documentation, including assessment information, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation documents. I took into account the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View and an email sent by a parent. I checked the single central register of recruitment checks and other documentation relating to safeguarding.