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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 November 2016

Mrs Nicola Sheerin
Headteacher
White Laith Primary School
Naburn Drive
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS14 2BL

Dear Mrs Sheerin

Short inspection of White Laith Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Since the previous inspection, you and your leadership team have ensured that the school remains good. You provide clear and focused leadership and are highly reflective. You know what is working well and what could be even better. You have been successful in developing a 'have-a-go' culture in which you encourage your staff to try new ideas to improve the school further. Consequently, staff morale is high and leaders are empowered to find ways of continually improving. The majority of parental responses were very positive about how well the school is led and managed.

You and other leaders keep a close watch on how well the school is doing. Your self-evaluation accurately captures the improvements you have made to teaching, the curriculum and the improved attainment of pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2. However, for you and your staff, good is not good enough and you strive to become even better. You have rightly identified the need to improve the progress of some key groups in school, including boys, the most able and some disadvantaged pupils. The attendance of some groups is improving but you recognise that further work is needed to sustain the improvements seen so far this term.

You have plans in place to tackle and improve these areas but they could be an even more useful tool for school improvement. Plans do not consistently convey how and when improvements will take place during the year ahead. Subject coordinators are enthusiastic and benefit from working within an environment in which innovation and risk taking are encouraged. They work well as a group,

sharing new ideas on how teaching can be improved further. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas that need improving. Some of their plans for improvement are stronger than others. There are occasions when, as with other plans in school, it is unclear how actions will affect the progress pupils make, including the most able pupils.

Governors share your high expectations of both staff and pupils. They are ambitious for the school, its staff and pupils. Governors do not rest on their laurels but provide you with good levels of challenge and support. They know that further work is needed to improve the progress of some groups of pupils, including boys and those who are disadvantaged. However, leaders and governors have not given enough attention to the progress the most able pupils are making. The school's website does not contain the latest up-to-date safeguarding policy or safer recruitment policy, and for some other policies it is unclear when reviews are due to take place.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils say that they feel well looked after and cared for in school. Staff have benefited from a range of training that is helping them be on the lookout for any potential signs of abuse, harm or extremism. Staff are clear about how to report any concerns that they may have and feel confident that leaders will take these seriously. Plans to support vulnerable pupils contain some clear and specific targets to improve levels of attendance. However, they do not contain enough detail on the progress they expect these pupils to make. This makes it more difficult to hold school leaders, professionals and other agencies to account for the impact of their work during multi-agency review meetings.

Inspection findings

- The curriculum provides pupils with numerous exciting and memorable learning experiences. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about history, geography, art, music and science. Pupils are also benefiting enormously from the range of trips and visits on offer, including trips to Skipton Castle, attending the Leeds Science Festival and the Young Voices Concert.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities further enhance an already rich and diverse curriculum. Pupils are developing their skills and talents including cooking skills, debating and gymnastics, as well as taking part in a range of sports. One parent summarised it well when she said that the school 'has broadened my child's horizons'.
- The most able pupils enjoy reading and read a wide range of books both at home and in school. This group of pupils read with fluency and good levels of expression. They take great care in sounding out new words and understand what they are reading. Some least-able readers in key stage 1 still have a way to go before they are confident and capable readers. This group still struggle with reading and this limits both their fluency and levels of comprehension.

- Pupils are encouraged to take on a range of leadership roles within school. Pupils enjoy and thrive on having this additional responsibility. 'Assertive mentoring' is proving a very effective way of involving pupils and parents in regular discussions about how well pupils are learning.
- A range of additional interventions have been put in place to improve the progress of some groups of children, particularly boys, in the early years. There are some signs that this is having an impact but leaders recognise that there is still further work needed to ensure that more pupils are ready for the demands of key stage 1.
- Work over time shows that the most able pupils are not challenged enough in some subjects. Some of the most able pupils commented that at times their work is 'a bit too easy'. There are times when teachers miss opportunities for pupils to write at length and to challenge pupils and deepen their thinking, especially in topic work, science and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- some groups of pupils, including boys, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make faster progress
- school plans, including subject coordinator and multi-agency and additional funding plans, are refined further so that there are clear and measurable outcomes with a deadline for what will be improved and by whom
- recent improvements in the attendance of some groups of pupils are sustained so that they are at least in line with national averages
- the school's website contains the latest up-to-date versions of safeguarding policies and all policies clearly show when they are to be reviewed.

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

Phil Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and a group of subject coordinators. I also met with a group of key stage 2 pupils, two governors and a local authority school improvement adviser. Together with you, your deputy headteacher and your special educational needs coordinator we visited all classrooms to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. Consideration was given to 10 free-text responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to pupil and staff survey responses. I evaluated recent information in relation to pupils' progress, the school self-evaluation document, the school development plan and a range of documentation about how you keep pupils safe. The key areas I looked at during the inspection were how effective safeguarding arrangements are, the progress children, especially boys, are making in the early years and the progress pupils make across key stages 1 and 2 in literacy, numeracy and across the wider curriculum.