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Mrs Katy Wilson
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Dear Mrs Wilson

Short inspection of Green Lea First School

Following my visit to the school on 2 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 March 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 took up your post in April this year and lost no time in establishing yourself as a knowledgeable headteacher, a skilled subject leader and a highly effective teacher of mixed-aged pupils. You have skilfully managed a period of temporary staffing and ensured that children's well-being and educational progress have not been hampered. You are ably supported by governors from a range of backgrounds and relevant professional expertise.

You have successfully established strong links with the immediate community and ensured that pupils of all ages benefit from the surrounding rural environment. In addition, you have created opportunities for pupils to meet others from a range of backgrounds and cultures. You have shared your clear expectations but you have welcomed ideas and encouraged new creative approaches. You have invited opinions from parents, pupils and staff about how the school is perceived and these findings are contributing to a new evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for future development.

Parents agree that their children are happy, safe, well looked after, taught well and make good progress. They believe that all staff make sure pupils are well behaved and respond quickly to any concern. One parent wrote, 'The school is a fabulous

mixture of fantastic teaching, kind children, wonderful parents and an amazing environment.' Another wrote that her child had, 'regained a love of learning' on transferring to the school. Pupils confirmed that they feel safe in school. Older pupils readily take care of the younger ones. They look out for potential dangers and make sure that the youngest children make friends and have someone to play with. Playground helpers provide games or ideas to keep pupils occupied. Pupils agreed that they are proud of their school because, 'Everyone helps us and spends time with us.' They appreciate the range of after-school clubs, educational trips and visitors into school.

You have continued to focus on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection in March 2012. The improvements included providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in other subjects and extending the assessment and tracking systems used for English and mathematics across the curriculum. Staff received training in preparing pupils to write more extensively. Pupils now learn specific skills and then plan, draft and amend their writing for different purposes. Pupils learn, gather and share ideas throughout the week and then apply the skills learned in English to detailed and extended written work. Pupils are genuinely interested in the topics and are keen to improve their skills.

Adults have developed the way they assess and record pupils' progress in response to the new curriculum. You arranged for staff to work closely with other schools to develop their accuracy and confidence in making judgements about pupils' progress and attainment. You regularly check pupils' progress by examining their work, meeting with staff to discuss pupils' strengths and difficulties and making sure that their developments are accurately recorded. You are in the early stages of sharing clear expectations with pupils so that they can assess for themselves how well they and their classmates are doing. You are developing similar procedures for other subjects in the light of the new curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff know pupils well and their close observation of pupils is built into their everyday practice. You, staff and governors are committed to keeping children safe from harm. You have provided regular training and timely updates to keep all staff well informed. You ensure that safeguarding is regularly discussed at staff and governor meetings so that everyone is kept up to date. Staff are suitably aware of the different forms of abuse and your policies provide clear procedures and contact details for referring concerns.

Staff regularly assess any risk regarding the school premises and all school activities. Action is taken swiftly wherever necessary. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know the risks of sharing personal information or photographs online and the dangers of communicating with strangers. You invite speakers such as representatives of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and local police to teach pupils about the dangers posed by strangers and maintaining personal safety. These themes are reinforced in lessons about personal health and safety and in assemblies.

Thorough checks are conducted when appointing new staff, governors and volunteers. These procedures are appropriately detailed and up to date. All checks on visitors are suitably vigilant.

Inspection findings

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector has requested that inspectors report on the most and least able readers on inspections.

- All children achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year in 2014 and 2015. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development remained well above the national figures in 2016. On entry to Reception, staff lose no time in assessing what the children know and can do. They quickly establish what the children need to develop from their different starting points and plan learning accordingly. Teachers and teaching assistants record children's progress in detail and they provide short-term support for children experiencing any learning difficulty. When children are identified as having particular strengths, such as in reading, they work alongside older pupils so that their interest and skills flourish.
- Together with governors, you conducted a clear analysis of the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 from their different starting points. Those pupils who left Reception having exceeded a good level of development did not all go on to attain standards at a greater depth in reading and writing in Year 2. You checked the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that pupils' progress was secure and suitably ambitious. You identified that the raised expectations of the new curriculum meant that pupils had more ground to cover to achieve the greater depth standard. External moderators confirmed that teachers' assessments were accurate and based on a substantial breadth of evidence.
- You have correctly identified that current assessment systems do not provide a clear line of sight from the starting points in Reception to the end of Year 4 when the pupils leave. As a result, those children exceeding a good level of development in Reception may not be given sufficiently challenging tasks over time to achieve standards at greater depth in Year 2.
- The most able readers at the end of key stage 1 read fluently and expressively, showing full understanding of the text. They change the tone of their expression when reading description, conversation, questions or commands. They can explain why characters behaved in certain ways and can anticipate plausibly what will happen next. They read extensively and have begun to favour certain authors.
- Less-able readers apply their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words or correct errors. They show their understanding of simple punctuation by changing expression for statements or questions. The reading books are appropriate for the pupils' abilities.
- Children in Reception recognise letters and the sounds they represent. Teachers make sure that children listen carefully and pronounce sounds accurately. They are careful to connect reading and writing skills by making sure the children form letters correctly in the air or on whiteboards. Teachers are quick to identify errors or where children lack confidence.

- The school's planning for different subjects is comprehensive. Teachers have identified the necessary age-related knowledge and skills required for individual subjects. Teachers are beginning to identify progressive steps in each subject to track individual pupil's achievement.
- Pupils' books and displays show that they learn about factual aspects of history and can anticipate what might happen next, given what they know. For example, pupils were able to predict correctly the outcome of a battle between the Romans and the Celts. In science, pupils investigate, perform simple tests, observe changes over time and collect simple data from measurements. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and take pride in their work.
- You have capitalised on the expertise within the community to further extend pupils' experience of learning. During the inspection, local volunteers were seen in an after-school club teaching pupils to sew and make lace. The pupils were understandably proud of the skills they were learning. You are developing pupils' experience of learning by making the best possible use of the exceptional local environment. Plans are under way to explore the locality to encourage pupils to work independently or cooperate as a team member, solve practical problems and calculate risks.
- Pupils know about the celebrations of different religions. They are delighted with their clay pots to hold tea lights for Diwali and their art work to celebrate Eid. Displays in corridors reinforce pupils' understanding of British values and pupils have added their practical examples of the principles in practice. For example, one pupil wrote, 'We understand and respect the roles of people who help us.'
- Residential visits for the older pupils helped them to appreciate pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds. Their experience helped them to build confidence as they prepared for transition to their next school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' assessments of pupils' progress track comprehensively from the pupils' different starting points to the end of Year 4, in particular, for the most able pupils
- pupils' understanding of teachers' expectations is further developed so they can accurately assess for themselves how well they and their classmates are doing.

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

Yours sincerely

Deana Holdaway

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the chair of the governing body, pupils and parents. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from Staffordshire local authority. We observed lessons together and looked at pupils' work. I looked at the responses from Parent View and the letters and emails sent to me by parents. I considered the school's self-evaluation and plans for development. I took into account pupils' standards of attainment and rates of progress. I read a range of school policies, including those for safeguarding, child protection and the impact of additional government funding. The inspection focused particularly on the progress and achievement of the most able pupils; how well pupils read; the development of the curriculum; how you have addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection; and safeguarding.