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Mrs Victoria Hayles
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Victoria Hayles

Short inspection of Westdale Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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.

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

You and the head of school work effectively together. You have overcome the challenges presented by staff changes in recent years and, together with governors, you have persevered to raise pupils' achievement over time. You clearly identify what the school needs to do to keep improving and offer staff the training they need in order to do their jobs well.

Your school is a purposeful place where you enable good behaviour and good teaching to flourish. Pupils say that they enjoy their learning. The classrooms that I visited had a calm atmosphere because pupils listen to their teachers well and get on with their work with minimum of fuss. This contributes to the good progress pupils make. As one parent commented, 'The ethos of the school is undeniably clear from the outset. There is a clear sense of discipline and the school community is strong.'

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staff changes. However, you and the head of school have maintained a focus on improving key areas. You have a range of ways to check the quality of teaching and you ensure that teaching is consistently good. You have developed effective assessment systems since the introduction of the new primary curriculum. You check frequently the progress that

pupils make and hold regular meetings with teachers to identify and help those pupils who are in danger of falling behind. There is a range of extra support to help pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to become successful learners and to achieve well.

You set realistic targets and your school improvement plan measures how well your school is doing towards its main priorities. In the previous academic year, you identified writing as an area for improvement and you now make sure that pupils write for a range of purposes. Unvalidated assessment information for 2016 shows that, by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in writing was above that reached by other pupils nationally.

You are currently providing more books for pupils to read. You and your staff have a clear focus on ensuring that pupils understand what they read. All of the pupils who read to me said that they love reading. The most able pupils read with fluency and confidence, while those who find reading more difficult are equipped with the skills they need to tackle new words and to make sense of their reading.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to develop the skills of subject leaders more fully. You have addressed this well. Subject leaders know about the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and are much better informed about pupils' progress. Those who are new to their roles receive good support to enable them to meet their responsibilities fully.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your designated leaders ensure that procedures are robust and methodical. Any concerns are recorded systematically and maintained in a well-organised way. You make sure that staff are familiar with the most recent guidance and receive the training they need in order to keep pupils safe. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow if they have any child protection concerns. Governors undertake relevant training and they understand their responsibilities. They carry out regular reviews of safeguarding procedures. Leaders maintain regular links with external agencies and receive frequent guidance from the local authority on safeguarding matters. Leaders are vigilant about pupils' attendance and have well-established systems to follow up any unaccounted absence.

You and your staff celebrate pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. A consistent approach means that pupils understand the rewards and sanctions and conform well to the school's expectations. The pupils I spoke with during the inspection agreed that bullying in their school is rare. They recognise what bullying is and the different forms it can take. They talked sensibly about the potential dangers of using technology, including social media. Leaders make sure that these issues are addressed well by the curriculum through assemblies and in lessons. They offer guidance to parents to help them to understand the potential risks pupils face when using the internet. Leaders modify the curriculum, especially for older pupils, to help them to understand how to remain safe from the risks associated with extremism and exploitation. They involve outside agencies, such as

the local police force and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to run workshops and assemblies for pupils. This good guidance helps pupils to know how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they have any concerns. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and all of the parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, agree.

Inspection findings

- By the end of Year 6 in 2015, pupils reached standards that were above those expected for their age and their rates of progress improved from previous years. An above-average proportion of the most able pupils reached the higher levels and those from disadvantaged backgrounds attained better than other pupils nationally. However, in 2016, unvalidated information shows that outcomes by the end of Year 6 were below those seen nationally. This is because, during their time in Year 6, pupils experienced unexpected disruptions to their learning which slowed the amount of progress they made. The school's information shows that pupils in other classes across the school made good progress. The pupils who are currently in Year 6 are already ahead of those from last year and they are on track to reach higher standards than those reached by previous Year 6 pupils. Other pupils currently in the school are making good progress.
- As a result of weaker outcomes in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling in 2016, leaders have urgently evaluated the effectiveness of the curriculum in these subjects. This has led to the reorganisation of classes and the adoption of new approaches to teaching. To help speed up the progress made by all groups of pupils, there is additional teaching and support for those pupils who need it. Although very recent, a consistent approach means that pupils are making good progress in reasoning and applying their mathematical skills and building solid knowledge about the different forms of grammar, punctuation and spelling. There is some way to go to see the full impact, but this consistent approach is leading to improvement in pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts and the way in which they use English skills in their writing.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is being strengthened and links with parents are improving markedly. Parents spoken with during the inspection report that they value the improved opportunities to discuss their children's learning. Leaders make sure that pupils and parents are involved in setting the targets for pupils to work towards. The role of leaders is developing well but they are not yet fully informed about the quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and its impact on pupils' progress overall.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Trips and visitors widen pupils' experiences and their understanding of the world around them. Art and music are popular and well promoted. Pupils say they really like art because they 'can be creative and express their feelings'. The curriculum helps pupils to consider moral issues, for example through a study of the holocaust, and develop a sense of right and wrong. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and visit places of worship. They know about the British values of democracy, liberty, respect and tolerance because these are promoted well by the curriculum. One pupil summed up their understanding, and the school's

values, by commenting that they were encouraged to 'treat others how you want to be treated'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new approaches to the teaching of mathematics enable pupils of all abilities to deepen their understanding in order to firmly grasp and successfully apply mathematical concepts
- the skills that pupils learn about grammar, punctuation and spelling are consistently applied in their writing
- there is thorough evaluation of the quality of teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the impact it has on pupils' progress overall.

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

Yours sincerely

Vivienne McTiffen
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

When I visited your school, I looked in detail at a number of key lines of enquiry.

- Is safeguarding effective and how well is safety promoted by the curriculum?
- How well have leaders addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection and what are leaders doing to improve pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics?
- How do leaders ensure that provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and how well do they maintain links with parents?
- How well do leaders ensure that the curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and an understanding of British values?

During the inspection, I met with you and the head of school. I met with the two leaders responsible for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and I met the leaders of English and mathematics. I also met the chair and four other members of the governing body. I observed an assembly. I visited some classes with the head of school to observe the teaching of mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. I spoke to pupils during lessons about their work and listened to some of the most able and the less able pupils read. I also met with a group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour around

the school and in class. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan. I looked at the school's assessment systems and samples of pupils' work with leaders. I spoke to parents at the end of the school day. I also took into account the 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 20 free-text responses from parents. I checked the single central record of recruitment checks and other documentation relating to safeguarding. The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.