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Dear Beverley Kenyon

Short inspection of Walwayne Court School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your leadership of the school is characterised by a conviction that all members of the school community should aim high and do their best. You firmly believe that the school's motto, 'Be your best, nothing less', should be lived by staff as well as pupils. As a result, you and your staff have nurtured a culture of high ambition in which pupils are encouraged to succeed.

You have empowered other staff to lead in the school, which has increased the school's capacity for improvement. This is because you believe that staff should be encouraged to take ownership of their work, to innovate and take risks. In so doing, they commit to their work with a high level of dedication and quickly develop expertise. In your words, staff are 'hungry to develop their practice'. This has a positive impact on various areas of the school's work. Staff genuinely care about the school in which they work.

Consequently, since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Teachers plan activities and provide work that is matched to the different needs of pupils. Lower-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively by teaching assistants and the use of tailored resources. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are prompted to tackle tasks of increasing

difficulty which make greater demands upon their thinking. As a result, pupils of different abilities are making better progress. In 2016, by the time pupils left the school, their progress overall was significantly above average in writing.

Because of the improving quality of teaching, pupils' attainment has been consistently strong over time. Leaders recognise, however, that phonics achievement has been below average recently and have taken steps to address this.

The work of leaders and governors has created a school culture in which pupils thrive. The school is an open, welcoming and attractive place. It consists of colourful, vibrant learning spaces which celebrate the fun and curiosity of learning. Pupils respond well to the teaching they receive, which is complemented by the wide range of enrichment activities provided, particularly the Thursday afternoon 'Sparkletime' sessions. During these sessions pupils can enjoy activities as diverse as singing, gardening, robot-making and forest school. In addition, pupils take advantage of further extra-curricular activities that take place at other times in the school day.

Staff manage behaviour in such a way that most pupils understand the importance of mutual respect, courtesy and good order. As a result, they are polite and considerate to each other. Pupils enjoy coming to school, learning and engaging with their peers. One pupil I spoke to said, 'You get a really good education.'

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of actions taken to improve phonics; and to ensure that different groups of pupils achieve to their full potential across the curriculum. We also considered the effectiveness of actions to improve attendance for different groups of pupils and whether safeguarding is effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders take safeguarding very seriously. You understand the importance of ensuring that pupils know how to manage risk and keep themselves safe. You ensure that pupils have a voice and feel comfortable in expressing their opinions and concerns. For example, every pupil is able to choose an 'adult buddy', a specific member of staff they can speak to if worried. Pupils I spoke to were able to talk in a confident, articulate way about how to stay safe online. For example, the pupils knew not to assume that people are necessarily who they say they are online. They also told me that they knew to speak to a member of staff if a visitor was observed in school without an identification lanyard.

Pupils feel safe in school and those I spoke to commented that there was no bullying that they were aware of. Some pupils who responded to the pupils' survey said there has been some bullying, but it was effectively dealt with. All

parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children were safe.

You and the deputy safeguarding lead keep up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive records of any concerns reported by staff. Staff know the correct procedures to follow should they have concerns because they receive the appropriate training in a timely manner. You meet with staff on a weekly basis to discuss potential safeguarding concerns, so that they are alert to the ongoing importance of safeguarding. Referrals are carefully tracked to ensure that the most appropriate action is taken. Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are fit for purpose.

Appropriate perimeter fencing, and gates which are locked at certain times in the school day, ensure that the school site is safe. Suitable risk assessments are in place, including those conducted on a daily basis by early years staff for the children playing or learning outside. Visitors are signed in appropriately and made aware of the school's expectations of behaviour and conduct while on the school site.

Inspection findings

- Governors and the school's improvement adviser are providing a good level of challenge and support to school leaders. They are aware that phonics achievement is an area for development and are monitoring this area of work closely. Governors use various sources of information, such as achievement data, to ask probing questions of school leaders and to evaluate the responses.
- In 2016, by the time they left the school, disadvantaged pupils made progress across a range of subjects that was either in line with or better than the progress made by their peers nationally. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils. In writing, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was significantly above average and in the top 10% of schools nationally. Pupils' work indicates that these pupils are continuing to make strong progress.
- Boys and girls of different abilities currently in the school make similar good progress in their various subjects. The most able pupils are encouraged to aim high and challenge themselves by attempting the more difficult tasks on offer. These are presented in the form of 'spicy' and 'volcanic' tasks, that come from a range that includes 'mild' and 'medium' tasks for pupils who need to develop their confidence before moving on. The most able pupils enjoy their learning and make progress because these increasingly difficult tasks demand more of them and challenge their thinking.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by staff to make progress in their learning. The work and resources provided by staff are successfully designed to make the learning accessible and engaging. Pupils also benefit from helpful guidance and questioning provided by teaching assistants. As a consequence, pupils are keen to participate and advance their learning.

- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. The work they produce in their English books and their 'Big Write' books shows that they regularly practise writing for different audiences and purposes. These opportunities also enable them to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. There is also a strong emphasis in the curriculum for developing mathematical skills. However, leaders acknowledge that pupils would benefit from further opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do in other subjects such as science and religious education. They are taking action to address this.
- Pupils are provided with different opportunities to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. For example, pupils participate widely in local community events and raise funds for charitable events. To achieve a better understanding of democracy, pupils participated in their own version of the European Union referendum.
- Pupils' phonics achievement in Year 1 has been below average for the last two years. Leaders are keenly aware of this and are rigorously tackling the issue. For example, a new phonics programme is being taught throughout the school. This programme is being coordinated by a leader who has specific responsibility to oversee this work and provide training and professional development to staff. Pupils are making more rapid progress but the impact of this work on their attainment is not yet fully evident.
- Overall attendance is above average. However, the attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, with some persistent absenteeism. Exclusions for these pupils are also higher than average. Leaders are working with parents and external agencies in an attempt to re-engage these pupils with school. Nevertheless, attendance for these groups is not improving.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View online survey agree, many strongly so, that their child is happy and taught well. They agree that the school is well led, that behaviour is good and that the school responds well to the concerns they raise. Nearly all respondents would recommend the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the leadership and teaching of phonics raises achievement
- action is taken to improve attendance, and reduce exclusions, of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you, the deputy safeguarding lead, pupils, representatives of the governing body and the school improvement adviser.

You and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. The work in pupils' books was also scrutinised jointly with middle leaders and I listened to pupils read.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school plan for excellence, attendance and exclusion, and child protection records. I also considered governing body minutes and notes of visits by the school improvement adviser.

In addition, I took account of 84 responses to the Parent View online survey, 21 responses to the staff survey and 51 responses to the pupil survey issued during the inspection.