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Mrs Shan Wynne-Jones
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Wynne-Jones

Short inspection of New Fosseway School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2017 with Ofsted Inspector Hester Millsop, 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Leaders know the school and its pupils exceedingly well. You are fully aware of the areas in need of improvement, such as the effectiveness of governors in holding the school more robustly to account for its performance and the need to embed new assessment procedures to carefully track the progress of each pupil. You have set about tackling these areas speedily and with zest.

Your strong leadership has enabled staff to further develop and blossom in their roles. You provide high-quality training to ensure that staff are extremely skilled teachers. This enables them to provide a wide range of learning activities which precisely meet pupils' needs. You have high expectations to which staff subscribe and, together, you share the highest aspirations for each pupil. Indeed, governors describe you as a leader who has 'lifted the lid off what pupils can achieve' and someone who is 'full of passion' to ensure that pupils receive the very best. As a result of high-quality teaching and a curriculum that motivates and inspires, pupils develop a love of learning and make good progress from extremely low starting points.

Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They describe how they love school and feel well supported and cared for by staff, not just in their learning, but also in their

physical and emotional needs.

Parents spoken to are overwhelmingly positive about the care, guidance and support their children receive. There were many complimentary comments made by parents, with a typical comment describing how 'the school is fantastic, can't fault it, there is a lot of learning that goes on'.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included how the school ensures that pupils are safe, the effectiveness of leaders in ensuring that pupils receive an effective standard of education, how teaching promotes good learning and the effectiveness of the curriculum in capturing the different abilities and interests of pupils. These key lines of enquiry are considered below under 'safeguarding' and 'inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including governors, consider the safeguarding of pupils to be of paramount importance. There is a strong culture of safety and security which permeates the school. There is a shared understanding of the need to protect these vulnerable pupils from all possible risks. Staff receive frequent and high-quality safeguarding training which provides them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to keep pupils safe. This enables them to take rapid action if they have any worries about a pupil. Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies and decisive action is taken when concerns arise.

Leaders and governors fully understand the importance of recruiting safely. All staff are carefully vetted prior to starting employment to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

Risk assessments are in place for activities undertaken within the school and in the local community. These are regularly monitored and evaluated by leaders to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose. For example, procedures for handovers between escorts and staff are detailed and carefully choreographed to ensure a safe and calm start for pupils at the beginning of the school day.

Pupils told inspectors that they are happy in school and feel safe. They describe how staff look after them and support them in tackling any worries or concerns they have.

Parents speak positively about site security and are confident that their children are kept safe. They welcome the support and guidance their children are given in keeping themselves safe in the local community. For example, parents are appreciative of the training being provided to their children when they use public transport, which includes the importance of not approaching or speaking to people they do not know. Such activities help instil independence and prepare pupils for adulthood.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The school's policies and procedures take account of the latest statutory guidance, which are adhered to by staff.

Inspection findings

- School leaders are passionate about the quality of education they provide. They are ably supported by staff who demonstrate drive and determination for pupils to make the very best possible progress. Leaders carefully check the learning of pupils through focused monitoring activities, visiting lessons and looking at pupils' work. They provide high-quality training and regularly share best practice to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to promote good learning. Teachers are encouraged by leaders to be reflective practitioners and review their teaching, for example with the use of technology to self-evaluate their own classroom practice. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve.
- The recent turbulence in governance has resulted in governors not holding leaders sufficiently to account for the overall quality of education pupils receive. They do not probe well enough what actions the school takes to improve achievement or check with enough rigour what is working well and why. Nevertheless, leaders are forging ahead with improvements which are clearly reflected in the strong progress pupils make.
- The quality of teaching over time is good, with some practice that is outstanding. This is a result of teachers' in-depth understanding of the complexity of each individual pupil, which enables them to plan activities which precisely meet their needs and excites them to learn. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in their learning from often extremely low starting points. Pupils have access to a broad range of subjects, which strongly focus on developing core skills in English and mathematics. For example, older pupils were absorbed in their mathematics, demonstrating their increasing confidence in using number and being able to apply their understanding in a range of practical activities. Pupils are effectively taught early reading skills. They are able to apply their knowledge of phonics in reading a range of texts. Pupils describe how they enjoy reading and are able to talk about preferred authors and different types of books. The school provides pupils of all ages with a range of reading books which carefully match their age and stage of development. These skills are supporting them in their early writing skills. Work viewed shows that pupils are making strong progress in their writing.
- Teachers use a range of signs and symbols that are specifically tailored to students' individual communication needs, which promotes a high level of engagement. For example, post-16 students were able to carefully follow recipes which used a range of symbols to successfully make chosen dishes.
- The previous inspection report highlighted the need to improve the range of accredited courses available to pupils. This you have done with aplomb. Pupils have access to a diverse range of courses which carefully mirror their ability and interests. For example, pupils have been successful in gaining BTEC qualifications in home cooking, childcare, sports leadership and land-based studies, alongside

entry-level qualifications in core subjects such as mathematics. Work experience is carefully planned to provide them with the opportunity to gain skills in their chosen career paths, such as childcare, animal care and sports coaching. Consequently, pupils leave the school well prepared for their next steps and all move on to employment, training or college.

- Leaders are forward-looking and are constantly exploring how they can further develop pupils' passions while continuing to raise their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are fully aware of the need to embed the new assessment systems that have been implemented to ensure that pupils' achievement and progress are consistently tracked across the school. Inspection evidence shows that this is being quickly and effectively tackled by leaders.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governance is strengthened in order for governors to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities and hold leaders more robustly to account for the quality of education pupils receive
- the new assessment processes are embedded so that pupils make the very best possible progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and your assistant headteachers. Together, we talked about the improvements which have been made since the last inspection. We carried out a 'learning walk' through classes, accompanied by a member of the leadership team. We also held discussions with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, met with an officer from the local authority and talked informally to pupils.

A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and information relating to pupils' current achievement and progress. We also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information.

We spoke to parents at the start of the day and also took into account the 10

responses to the online survey 'Parent View' and considered additional comments received from parents.