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Ms Amanda Lewis
Lons Infant School
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Dear Ms Lewis

Short inspection of Lons Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and your staff have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your evaluation of the school is accurate and consequently, the plans to address areas of weakness such as the provision for phonics are well focused and reviewed frequently to make sure they result in sustained improvement. Governors support leaders well and are involved in creating plans for future improvements. Governors speak with pride about the school and share your enthusiasm and desire to further improve it.

Staff enjoy working at the school and share leaders' ambition for further improvement. They feel well supported because there are good systems in place to share ideas and plan together. Parents speak highly of the school and appreciate the strong 'family feel' of the school and the warmth and approachability of staff. They believe that staff get to know the children well as soon as they arrive and that when they leave you, they are well prepared for key stage 2.

Parents say their children enjoy coming to school, and that they feel that their children make good progress and are cared for very well. Pupils enjoy their learning at school and work hard in lessons. They develop a love of learning because you and your staff ensure that the curriculum provides enriching experiences through relevant visits to places of interest and on-site experiences such as Forest Schools work. A strong commitment to developing pupils' care, concern and respect for others is evident.

Pupils show a desire to learn and behave well both in and out of lessons. Pupils are friendly, courteous and happy. They say that they enjoy taking on additional responsibilities such as being a 'worry buddy' at breaktime or distributing fruit. They appreciate the rewards they receive such as 'Golden Time' on a Friday, Monday's awards assembly and 'Golden Dinners' where they are able to have their lunch with a member of staff. They report that lessons are interesting and that they are shown how to improve their work.

Teaching is of a good standard because lessons are well planned and delivered and teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning effectively. However, opportunities are not always taken to challenge the most able group of learners early enough in lessons.

You tailor additional support effectively to meet a range of needs. Plans for spending allocations of additional funding such as the pupil premium, and physical education and sport premium funding are carefully made and the impact of support and interventions are measured and monitored.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff follow the agreed procedures if they are concerned about any pupil. Concerns are addressed quickly and leaders liaise well with the other professionals to reduce any risk of harm. Pre-employment checks on staff meet requirements, although during this inspection some paper-based checks had not been fully transferred onto the single central record. This administrative omission was addressed immediately and was not indicative of any shortcomings in the checking procedures. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and know who they would speak to should they ever feel sad or scared about anything. Governors have been trained in how to fulfil their 'Prevent' duty and know the procedures for reporting concerns. There is a nominated governor for safeguarding who understands the responsibility for undertaking safeguarding checks in school.

Inspection findings

- You have tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection well:
 - Work scrutiny now shows that work is clearly matched to the needs of pupils and appropriate challenge is provided for the most able pupils in mathematics. The most able pupils, could, however, be tasked with challenging work sooner as they sometimes have to complete work that other children are doing and that is too easy for them before being given work that is matched more closely to their needs.
 - Pupils are now consistently engaged in lessons and show positive attitudes to learning.
 - Learning journals used in the early years have been improved. More engagement opportunities with parents have been sought such as the 'helping hands' activity and 'wow' post-it note display board where parents are able to highlight to school staff their child's successes and achievements at home. An online programme is used to collate evidence

of pupils' abilities and progress in the early years but at the moment parents are not accessing this information to gain a valuable insight into their child's learning.

- Staff now work as a tight team, sharing best practice within and beyond the school. The English lead has visited and worked successfully with other practitioners within the teaching alliance that the school is involved with. Effective practice for the teaching of phonics has then been brought back to school and disseminated to staff.
- The school has taken great strides to strengthen phonics provision. This has included raising the profile of the activity and making the sessions sharper and more rigorous, for example. Phonics sessions that the inspector observed were well paced and interactive, resulting in full pupil engagement and enjoyment. These observations and the work seen in phonics and literacy books indicate that pupils are making good progress. Clear links are now made between these sessions and the literacy work that follows. Pupils are given more opportunities to practise their letters and sounds, including the use of 'tricky' words. The effectiveness of this work now has to be closely monitored and evaluated over a longer period to ensure that it is having the desired impact.
- Attendance is above the national average for the vast majority of pupils but has been below the national average for a small group of disadvantaged pupils. The headteacher is working closely with families to address this issue. School attendance information for the current term and academic year show that this is now an improving situation.
- The school has clear plans in place for spending its allocation of money to support disadvantaged pupils. The school has identified that help with pupils' emotional development is a focus as this is often a barrier to learning for its pupils. In addition to these nurturing interventions, other programmes are put in place to help pupils with their learning across the curriculum. The effectiveness of these interventions are evaluated and changes are made where necessary.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies that are currently in place to improve phonics are fully embedded and lead to evidence of sustained and consistent improvement in levels of achievement in phonics
- the needs of the most able pupils are consistently met and that their work is routinely suitably challenging.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Savage
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, pupils and two governors. I also met with a representative of the local authority. We visited classes in the early years and key stage 1 together. I met with leaders of mathematics and literacy and reviewed samples of pupils' work. I took account of 37 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered further written comments from parents. I spoke with a group of pupils from across the school. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including the school improvement plan and safeguarding policies and procedures. I reviewed leaders' records of behaviour and their response to incidents. I discussed your own evaluation of the school's performance with you.