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Mrs Sharon Downes
Interim Headteacher
Inglehurst Junior School
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Dear Mrs Downes

Short inspection of Inglehurst Junior 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

At the heart of this school is a strongly shared commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, underpinned by a vision of 'Living together, learning together, laughing together'. All pupils, regardless of background, are cared for and supported to achieve. Pupils are very polite, show respect for each other and for adults, and work extremely well together in activities from team games in the playground to collaboratively tessellating shapes in art. I was impressed by the welcoming learning environment that you and your staff create, with attractive displays and the celebration of pupils' achievements, from written work to clay models.

Despite several changes in leadership and staff roles since the last inspection, the school has continued to improve. You have been supported well by the local authority as you, and the school's senior leaders, have maintained the strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, pupils achieve very well over time and the proportion of pupils who excel is significantly above that found nationally. For example, test scores for pupils in Year 6 in 2016 placed the school in the top 5% of schools for writing, the top 10% for mathematics and the top 25% for reading, compared to schools nationally.

However, you have rightly recognised that some areas of the school's work need to improve further in order to match these high standards. For example, pupils in Year 6 in 2016 did not attain national expectations in science and results for disadvantaged pupils and girls were much lower in this subject than for other groups of pupils. Leaders and governors are already tackling improvements in science and ensuring that the school's curriculum is promoting strong progress and attainment for all pupils.

You are also focused on improving the attainment and progress of some middle-ability pupils in reading, and your staff are already sharing strong practice across the school, so that pupils' higher-order reading skills are developed sufficiently.

Leaders and governors are aware that absence for some groups of pupils is too high and you are working hard with pupils and their families to improve this.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have established a strong safeguarding culture at school and staff know what to do if there are any concerns about a pupil. The staff are well trained and take safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Systems for safeguarding pupils' welfare are very effective and record-keeping is thorough. Leaders use the information that this system generates, highlighting any patterns in pupils' behaviour. As a result, support for pupils is put in place quickly, which might include working with other agencies, for example, or individual counselling for pupils.

Leaders have ensured that recording systems are fully in place for the recruitment of staff. Governors ensure that the necessary checks have been made and that documents are kept in good order.

During the inspection, the pupils spoken to showed a clear understanding of what bullying is and what it is not. They were clear that any incidents, if they ever occurred, were dealt with quickly. Pupils told me that they felt safe in school. There were no concerns about bullying or pupils' safety raised by parents through the online questionnaire, Parent View.

This is a caring school where pupils are known as individuals and every aspect of pupils' welfare is taken into account by staff. Pupils are helped to keep themselves safe and are very knowledgeable about e-safety, cyber bullying and the importance of healthy lifestyles.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, the proportions of pupils who exceed expected progress by the end of Year 6 have risen steadily in reading, writing and mathematics. The numbers of pupils in other year groups who are making more than expected progress are also high. You and the school's leaders have worked hard on improving ongoing assessments of pupils' progress, and on ensuring that there are close links between training and development for all staff. For

example, during my visits to classes, accompanied by you, we found that teaching assistants were being deployed very well, and according to their skills. In one session, a teaching assistant was supporting a group of the most able pupils to tessellate shapes in art. The questions the teaching assistant asked pupils, and her responses to pupils' answers, deepened their understanding of mathematics and art, and as a result, pupils were very engaged in their learning.

- Following disappointing results in last year's science assessments in Year 6, you and the school's leaders reviewed the approach to science by looking at the curriculum. You have strengthened leadership by appointing a new science coordinator who is ensuring that the school's curriculum is promoting strong progress for all pupils. You have introduced a rigorous tracking system which identifies where pupils are falling behind. These assessments enable the school to support pupils not reaching expected age-related attainment, or not making enough progress. You have raised the profile of science considerably by introducing a 'Science Week' and a 'Space Camp'. You have established links with scientists, including from the local university. I looked at a sample of pupils' books during the inspection, and you agreed with me that pupils were not given enough opportunities to undertake investigative work in science and, as a result, pupils' skills in scientific enquiry needed development. You and senior leaders also felt that the school needed to review its resources so that staff and pupils had the correct equipment to enable access to a broad scientific curriculum. You, leaders and governors recognise that the development work already underway should be included in the school's improvement plans, so that actions can be monitored and progress evaluated.
- You and the school's leaders agreed with me that not enough middle-ability pupils, including disadvantaged middle-ability pupils, made rapid progress in reading during the previous school year compared to other groups. Leaders and governors have worked very hard over time to use the school's resources to support the most vulnerable pupils, and information available in school during the inspection indicates that outcomes for this group of pupils are on track to be much better this academic year. You attribute this to using the pupil premium grant to invest in a reading intervention programme, as well as in small-group coaching for pupils. Despite these developments, leaders and governors are not complacent and recognise that a more consistent approach to the teaching of reading is needed across the school, particularly in developing pupils' high-order reading skills. You are already undertaking this by using experienced school staff to coach less experienced colleagues.
- In 2016, the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was lower than that of others in the school, and was in the lowest 10% nationally. Persistent absence was also an issue for these groups in 2016. I found that this year there is still an issue with the absence rates of some pupils, particularly from these groups. You and senior leaders are working hard by using the additional pupil premium funding to improve the attendance rates for these pupils. You work closely with an education welfare officer and the local authority but recognise that there is still more work to be done.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils are given sufficient, regular opportunities to undertake practical, investigative work in science
- staff develop a consistent approach to the teaching of reading, particularly in the teaching of higher-order reading skills
- persistent absence is reduced for those who are disadvantaged and pupils 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 education for children's services in Leicester City. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Damien Turrell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and your science subject leader. I considered the responses of parents from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I accompanied you to several classrooms in the school, spending a short time in each. I looked at samples of pupils' work. I viewed a wide range of documents including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and its plans for further improvement, information on how the pupil premium is spent and a number of policy documents, including those for child protection and special educational needs. I looked at governors' minutes and information about pupils' progress and attainment. I looked at attendance figures and case studies. I examined the school's website to check that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at playtime. I met with groups of them at lunchtime and also heard pupils read.