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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Claire Kenworthy
Headteacher
Wilberlee Junior and Infant School
Heys Lane
Wilberlee
Slaithwaite
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD7 5UX

Dear Mrs Kenworthy

Short inspection of Wilberlee Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has been through a period of substantial change over the last few years following the previous headteacher's retirement in 2014. The governors have been instrumental in enabling the school to improve by taking the strategic decision to join a federation with two other small, local schools. This has allowed Wilberlee to benefit from a wider team of leaders who provide expertise across the three schools. Your headship of all three schools and the sharing of other key leadership roles across the federation has meant that the school now has greater capacity for further improvement.

Following the federation, it was clear to leaders that there was a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and that assessments were not as accurate as they should have been. Leaders are now clear about the strengths and weaknesses and have accurately identified priorities for improvement which are successfully improving outcomes for pupils. In 2016, you were disappointed that while progress was broadly in line with the national average at the end of key stage 2, attainment had dipped below national figures. Actions taken since then are enabling a greater proportion of pupils to be working at and above age-related expectations. However, you understand that there is still work to do. In particular, you know that many of the new systems which you have introduced are early in their development, for example the assessment system and the new reading and writing approach. These

now need to become more established so that they improve pupils' outcomes more rapidly.

Your development of a team of leaders has been the key to success in terms of improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This has also given opportunities for leaders to develop by sharing expertise and responsibilities across a wider group. You have ensured that leaders are encouraged to be outward-facing, are constantly seeking ways to improve and are effectively held to account for the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes. Governors are also effective in their challenge and support for school leaders and have been successful in driving improvements. An example of this is the transformation of the previous caretaker's house to develop a bespoke space for collaborative opportunities for pupils and staff across the federation.

Pupils cooperate together in a friendly and supportive way and demonstrate a well-developed understanding of tolerance and respect. They say that Wilberlee is a special place to be because it feels like being part of one happy family. Pupils have positive relationships with the staff, who know each of them individually. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very good and they enjoy learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You work closely with other professionals and services to ensure that children and families receive timely and effective support. The training that staff receive means that they are effective in recognising and responding to signs of concern.

Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after, and parents agree. Pupils have complete faith that adults in the school will listen to them if they are worried at all. They do not feel that bullying is an issue. They are confident that staff deal with any rare issues of poor behaviour firmly and fairly. The curriculum provides countless opportunities to support children in being safe. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about how to stay safe, for example when they are online, crossing the road or in the event of a fire.

Inspection findings

- You have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by involving the wide range of leaders across the federation. Teachers have had access to high-quality training and development from curriculum specialists within the federation. You have strengthened this further by making use of the strong links with other local schools and the local authority. As a result, staff have an increasing awareness of the expectations required in the year groups they teach. They are also more accountable for pupils' outcomes through the performance management system, which links to the school's main improvement priorities. Leaders' regular checks on teaching and learning are successful in identifying

where teachers require any individual training and support. Support is then provided by a mentor who is a leader working in another federation school within the same year groups. You are aware that work in pupils' books does not always demonstrate the same high expectations across all three classes. You agree that this needs to be a focus if pupils are to reach the highest standards they are capable of. Additionally, work in pupils' mathematics books identifies that there are only minimal opportunities for reasoning and explaining their thinking. You acknowledge that this is the next step in further developing pupils' understanding of the concepts they have been taught.

- You have been very successful in creating a more accurate and rigorous assessment system. Leaders set challenging targets for each individual pupil and track their progress carefully. Pupil progress meetings now involve you, the class teacher, support staff, special educational needs coordinator and the assessment leader. This joint approach to looking at the progress of individuals means that there is greater reliability in the school's assessment information. Leaders make sure that pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified and monitored closely. Adjustments can then be made to the support they receive to enable them to make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator makes effective links with a range of professionals to support the needs of individuals and is able to access the range of resources and staff expertise on offer across the federation. Leaders have targeted the most able pupils, who have the potential to exceed the expectations at the end of a key stage. Staff run 'exceeding' groups across the federation to provide the precise support these pupils need to reach the highest standards. Your school assessment information confirms that an increasing proportion of pupils are meeting and exceeding the expectations for each year group.
- There were some inconsistencies in the writing outcomes achieved in 2016. In particular, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test was well below the national average. You have, rightly, addressed this issue with haste. There is now greater consistency in teaching and increased subject knowledge following staff training. The more-rapid progress that pupils are now making is evident in their books. The school's assessment information also shows the difference made by improved teaching and targeted interventions for identified pupils. As a result of your swift response to develop this aspect of pupils' writing, the proportion of current pupils on track to reach the expectations at the end of each key stage has risen dramatically.
- The proportion of children in early years who achieved a good level of development was just below the national average in 2016 as not enough children met the early learning goal for writing. You had already identified that the approach to phonics, while effective in supporting reading development, was not having sufficient impact on children's writing. Leaders have introduced a new approach to developing early reading and writing. This, in conjunction with staff training, more accurate assessment and better tracking of children's progress, is resulting in more rapid progress for the children currently in early years.
- Attendance overall has been above average since the last inspection. However, for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance in 2016 was in the lowest 10% nationally. The proportion

of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and were persistently absent from school was also in the lowest 10% nationally. Leaders took immediate action by giving responsibility for monitoring attendance and developing pastoral support to the deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher started tracking the attendance of all pupils, raised the profile of attendance with pupils and parents and also explored the links between learning and attendance at pupil progress meetings. As a result, attendance is improving for all groups of pupils this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are consistently high expectations of pupils' work in books
- there are more opportunities for pupils to use reasoning in their mathematics
- the newly introduced strategies become embedded so that they can continue to improve outcomes for pupils more rapidly.

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

Yours sincerely

Kirsty Godfrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, a representative from the local authority and three members of the governing body. I evaluated documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; the development plan; information about pupils' progress; attendance records; and information about safeguarding. I spoke with several parents and a group of pupils from a range of year groups. We visited classrooms together to observe teaching and learning and scrutinised pupils' work in books.