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Mr Jonathan Jones
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Lady Bay Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection and you have successfully addressed the weaknesses identified at that time. In particular, you have ensured that pupils' progress in reading has improved so that it is now at least as good as in writing and mathematics. As a result of your emphasis on the progress of the most able, those pupils now make consistently good progress in reading.

As an experienced and effective headteacher, you have an enthusiastic vision for the school. Under your wise leadership, the relatively new senior leadership team members share an incisive grasp of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement. Together, you form a strong team, demonstrating a good capacity to drive continued improvement.

Pupils are justifiably proud of their school, describing it as a 'kind and friendly' place where 'everybody knows each other and you can go to any teacher if you need help'. One pupil described their time at Lady Bay as being 'like a rollercoaster, because it's exciting but it's over too soon!' Staff say they feel proud to work at the school and many parents express very positive opinions about the teaching and about their children's progress.

Pupils at Lady Bay Primary School typically make good progress and achieve standards in English and mathematics which are consistently higher than national

averages; often significantly so. As one of the areas of focus for this inspection, we agreed to examine the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements across the whole curriculum, in subjects other than English and mathematics.

The school's work to redesign and customise the curriculum, ably led by the deputy headteacher, is impressive. The positive impact of this work is clear to see in pupils' books, in the high-quality displays around the entire school and in pupils' obvious enthusiasm for the interesting activities provided for them. In their well-presented 'learning challenge journals', pupils frequently apply skills gained in English and mathematics lessons across a range of other subjects.

In particular, the teaching of art is exceptionally strong and pupils of all ages produce creative pieces of work that are a delight to view. Corridors and halls resemble galleries, showcasing pupils' work inspired by numerous artists, such as Gustav Klimt, Wayne Thiebaud and Clarice Cliff. Pupils have produced work in various media, such as paintings, pastels, felt-making, tie-dyeing, batik, printing and illuminated manuscripts, to an impressively high standard.

Other displays reflect topic work across the curriculum, including work inspired by visits and visitors. For example, the school library is decorated with a lively display of work inspired by a visit from the illustrator of the popular children's book 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. Another striking feature of the curriculum at Lady Bay is the annual 'museum' activity, where the Year 6 pupils create an interactive museum experience for parents and younger pupils, linked to their topic work. Pupils of all ages were keen to talk to me about their creative work, for which they feel a great deal of pride.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at this school is relatively small. However, you spend the additional funding wisely to provide one-to-one teaching for disadvantaged pupils of all abilities. Your work in relation to the 'aspiration workshops' and visits to Nottingham University for older pupils is worthy of mention. There is a clear culture of high expectation for all pupils, regardless of their circumstances. There is strong leadership in this aspect of the school's work and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

Although the school's overall historical data is strong, you have rightly identified the progress of boys as an area of focus, especially those with low prior attainment in English. The positive impact of this work can be seen in many of the pupils' books, but there is still work to be done to help small groups of less-able boys, in the early years and in key stage 1, to catch up quickly.

Your monitoring records show that the vast majority of teaching is securely good and the inspection findings agree with this evaluation. You have recognised the aspects of teaching that need to be improved and are addressing these systematically. In a few instances, where teaching is weaker, the work in pupils' books is less-well presented. This can be seen most markedly in the work of a small number of less-able boys.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All records relating to child protection, behaviour or bullying incidents are detailed and scrupulous.

The site is safe and pupils told me they feel safe because: 'Everybody gets on and teachers help you if you're struggling with anything.' Pupils spoke confidently about staying safe from bullying, describing instances as 'rare' but if it does happen then it gets 'sorted out quickly'. Pupils were very clear about staying safe online and confirmed that they had received lots of teaching about safety in lessons and assemblies. Pupils showed caring and courteous attitudes towards each other, summed up in the words of one pupil who commented, 'This is a school for everyone, including people who are disabled.'

Inspection findings

- Based on my observations of a range of activities across the school, it is clear that the above average standards achieved in English and mathematics apply equally across a wide range of other subjects. The breadth and quality of the curriculum are real strengths of the school.
- Data analysis shows that, in 2016, some pupils made significantly less progress from their starting points than other pupils nationally. Your own analysis shows that this applied, in particular, to the progress of less-able boys in key stages 1 and 2. You also identified the progress of boys in the early years, and in key stage 1, as areas of focus. Although boys in the early years typically make better progress than boys nationally, they fail to make the very good progress that girls make at this school. During the inspection, we examined the positive impact of the school's improvement work in this regard.
- Successful actions have been taken to promote and improve boys' writing in the early years. Staff have set up an 'office' area to encourage independent writing, and the pleasing results of this addition are reflected in children's books. Good use is made of the limited space available; children can access the outdoor areas freely, including use of the trim trail, bikes and scooters, in order to develop their physical coordination and their early writing skills. This has also helped to improve the quality of boys' writing in the early years.
- In Year 1, the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is effective and, this year, all groups of pupils are expected to achieve equally well.
- In Year 6, the school's latest assessments show that all groups of pupils are making equally good progress from their starting points, when compared to other pupils nationally.
- The chair of governors knows the school well and provides effective leadership. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities thoroughly; they readily challenge leaders on the school's performance. They are especially mindful of the school's role within the local community and are rightly focused on providing a good quality of education for all pupils, regardless of ability or need.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recent improvements in boys' reading and writing are sustained and accelerated so that all groups of pupils make at least expected progress by the end of key stages 1 and 2
- the quality of teaching improves so that all teaching is at least good and pupils in all year groups produce work that is presented to an equally high standard.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Watkins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the senior leadership team. I met with groups of pupils and the chair of governors. I listened to pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work across a wide range of subjects. We conducted a tour of the school together and visited many lessons and activities. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and spoke with a wide range of school staff. I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the day and I considered the views of parents expressed in the 99 responses posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I evaluated a wide range of documents, including minutes of governors' meetings, monitoring reports and safeguarding documentation.