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Mrs D Shaw
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Shaw

Short inspection of Jackfield Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 13 July 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.

You and governors have significantly developed the building and internal environment in recent years. You have ensured that Jackfield maintains its Victorian heritage and is complemented by a bright modern reception area and meeting rooms. Promoting a love of learning is a priority in your school. Pupils' learning takes pride of place. This was illustrated by pupils' combined efforts to share and celebrate their talents in your prominent Beatrix Potter display. You have a very experienced staff who take pride in what they do and put children first.

You and governors have built a highly capable team of leaders. Leaders are very driven people who lead by example and are well respected by the community. While there was some variation in outcomes in 2016, leaders and staff have a clear handle on school improvement. The overall quality and potential of leadership within the school is impressive.

Tracking and assessment systems have developed significantly since the last inspection. These developments have helped focus your priorities. In 2016, though outcomes in early years and the Year 1 phonics screening check showed further improvement, achievement in Year 2 indicated weaknesses in some areas. Notably, too few disadvantaged pupils were reaching age-related expectations in core

subject areas. Your improvement work over the last 12 months has halted this dip in performance. Pupils' books show strong progress from their different starting points.

Jackfield has several emerging key strengths. These include the teaching of phonics, provision within early years and pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils were keen to welcome me to their school; they say that they feel happy and safe.

Staff and parents speak very highly of the school. Parents that I spoke to welcome the approachability of staff and attention to pupils' personal development. Staff unanimously enjoy their work. They describe the school as an extended family and are passionate about making a difference.

At the last inspection you were asked to accelerate progress, particularly that of boys, by ensuring that tasks are well matched to needs. You have devised and delivered staff training and support to help teachers rise to this task. During the inspection, I scrutinised the progress of boys. Boys' books show strong progress from their different starting points. Your assessment information shows that differences between boys and girls are diminishing. In my discussions, staff and governors were quick to recognise the importance of this priority and are committed to securing further improvements.

You were also asked to improve teaching so that more is outstanding. Staff routinely share their skills and expertise. You have fostered a very open and forward-thinking approach to self-improvement. Teachers review their performance management records and tease out the specific areas of their practice they want to develop. They then share these areas with one another and work collaboratively to improve the overall quality of teaching. This open-handed approach to improving teaching is having a positive impact. Pupils are engaged in their learning and books show evidence of sustained progress.

Despite these key improvements, you acknowledge that strategies for securing a consistent level of challenge in learning must now be embedded and built upon further. There is also scope for your school improvement plans to have more precise actions and timescales.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that systems to safeguard children are organised and fit for purpose. Staff and governors are clear about their responsibilities and understand reporting procedures well.

Staff know exactly how to report a concern and are able to recall the details of specific training. For example, they are very clear about the potential signs related to different forms of abuse.

Pupils receive regular visits from the local police force and other emergency services. This ensures that pupils have a healthy understanding of the roles that

different people play in keeping the community safe. You and governors also ensure that swimming lessons are offered from an early age. By the summer term of Reception, children are learning to swim on a weekly basis. This is an important skill given the extensive system of waterways in the immediate area.

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection, I met with you and senior leaders to review the school's overall effectiveness. We focused on Jackfield's key strengths and areas for development and devised several key lines of enquiry. The bullet points below summarise the findings of these key areas.

- You regularly monitor attendance and offer specific support to families. Overall attendance remains broadly in line with the national average and any persistent absenteeism is quickly acted upon.
- The school supports a number of children looked after. The personal education plans of children looked after are in place and contain specific targets to secure improvements in pupils' personal development and overall achievement.
- Assessment systems have developed significantly over the last three years. Leaders meet with teachers at scheduled times throughout the year in dedicated pupil progress meetings. These meetings hold teachers to account for pupils' ongoing performance. Information from meetings is used effectively to target any underachievement and provide additional support. Leaders have a very good understanding of the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Effective use of assessment information and support from staff are successfully diminishing the difference between boys' and girls' achievement. The curriculum has been designed to appeal to pupils' interests and ensure high levels of engagement. As a result, boys' writing books demonstrate very rapid rates of progress. However, staff recognise that these improvements must now be embedded and built upon further.
- Additional funding has been used to target the development of children's speaking and listening skills. Staff training and additional resources are having a marked impact on outcomes in the early years. Children in Nursery and Reception receive highly effective support and make strong progress. This progress is evident in their books and the school's own assessment information. The early years leader skilfully targets areas for development, and the team is successfully addressing any differences between groups of children. Disadvantaged pupils in particular have made significant gains in their learning in the last year due to high-quality support.
- The teaching of phonics is a key strength of the school. Children skilfully sound out letters and identify a wide range of words from a very young age. During the inspection, children in Reception were scouring the playground for 'nonsense' and 'real' words. They were thoroughly engrossed in their learning and were successfully sharing their findings with staff and sorting words into different containers.
- In 2016, too few disadvantaged pupils reached the expected levels in core

subjects by the end of Year 2. This dip in attainment has been quickly addressed. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to secure developments. Pupils' books evidence strong progress in writing and mathematics. High-quality phonics teaching is also improving standards in reading. Over the last year, a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils have reached age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a result of improvements in teaching and actions taken following the careful analysis and tracking of pupils' needs. Teachers have particularly focused on challenge. They now routinely adjust activities if pupils find learning too easy. This strong practice must continue so that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are consistently challenged during their time at Jackfield.

- The school development plan sets out the priorities derived from self-evaluation. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness. However, the actions set out in school plans are not precise enough. It is not clear exactly how much some improvement activities will cost, or the order in which they will be scheduled throughout the school year. This can inhibit the extent to which governors are able to fully track the impact of leaders' actions.
- Despite the shortcomings in school action plans, governors do understand the school's overall strengths and areas for development. Minutes from governing body meetings evidence how they hold leaders to account for pupils' achievement. Governors are clear about the school's emerging priorities and take their responsibilities seriously. Some governors have long-standing relationships with the school, either having worked at or attended the school as pupils in the past. The governing body is very proud and passionate about the school's role in the local community.
- The local authority and local junior school are also committed to securing improvement and working collaboratively with the school. The feeder junior school headteacher was present throughout the inspection to offer support, and gain a clear understanding of how pupils' learning can be progressively built upon as they move into Year 3. The local authority knows the school well. Advisers have brokered several reciprocal partnerships with other schools in Stoke-on-Trent, to develop and improve the impact that teaching has on learning. These partnerships have secured improvements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements in boys' writing are further embedded so that strong progress is sustained
- teachers continue to adapt and make changes to tasks to ensure that learning is sufficiently challenging
- actions within school development documents are refined, including spending forecasts and timescales, so that governors can monitor the impact of leaders' work more closely.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Stoke-on-Trent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Keay
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and senior leaders to review your self-evaluation and agree key lines of enquiry. I observed teaching in Reception and in Year 2. Observations were conducted jointly with leaders. I heard pupils read in Year 1.

I scrutinised pupils' work in mathematics and writing in Year 2. I reviewed children's writing books in Reception. These activities were undertaken with leaders.

I met with the school business manager to review the single central record. I reviewed a range of safeguarding information with the school's designated safeguarding lead. Documents that were reviewed included: child protection files, minutes from child protection meetings, records completed by staff, training records and the school's accessibility plan.

I met with three governors, including the chair and vice-chair of governors. I discussed the school's improvement journey with Stoke-on-Trent's Strategic Manager for Pupil Achievement.

There were no responses to the staff or pupil questionnaires. There were insufficient responses on Parent View to generate a report. I spoke to pupils throughout the inspection and held a meeting with 22 staff. I took account of five parental responses via Ofsted's free-text service. I met with several parents at the start of the school day.