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Mrs Anne Stead
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Stead

Short inspection of Warley Town School

Following my visit to the school on 4 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 in your school since it 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. Warley Town School is a friendly and welcoming school, where pupils enjoy their learning and behave well. The curriculum is engaging and serves the needs of all pupils. Parents and carers are particularly positive about the school and report that they feel very fortunate that their children have the chance to attend such a caring school where their needs are closely considered.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified two areas for improvement. The first was to further improve teaching by ensuring that work was appropriately challenging for all groups of learners and to improve the effectiveness of teachers' checks on pupils' work. Since then, the pace of learning has improved and it is clear that pupils work hard and are often given challenging activities. They are also given regular opportunities to reflect on their learning. This includes opportunities to correct errors and improve their work. Furthermore, the checks that teachers make on pupils' work have helped them to plan activities which generally match pupils' needs closely. Occasionally, teachers set work that does not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently.

The second area for improvement was around leaders' use of monitoring. The inspectors had recommended that the wealth of information gathered through monitoring was used more sharply to provide leaders with a clear understanding of teachers' strengths and where improvements could be made. Since then, monitoring

has become more rigorous, robust and accurate. Importantly, it has led to bespoke training which meets teachers' needs well, giving them the chance to further develop their skills, which has led to continued, good pupil outcomes.

In 2016, outcomes for Year 6 pupils were disappointing, particularly in light of the gaps in attainment between boys and girls, where girls were underperforming significantly. You and your leaders recognised these issues and have worked effectively to ensure that pupils' achievements have been more closely tracked, leading to better support for different groups of pupils, where necessary. As a result, 2017 provisional outcomes for Year 6 appear pleasing; both the attainment and progress of all groups of these pupils have improved and they are now far better prepared for Year 7.

Since the last inspection, the gap in attainment between boys and girls in writing at key stage 1 has been wider than seen nationally. You, alongside your leaders and teachers, recognised the need to improve boys' written accuracy rapidly and ensure that boys were well prepared for their next stage of learning. You have developed the curriculum to improve the opportunities for writing and to engage boys in these opportunities. Consequently, this year the gap between boys and girls in writing has diminished significantly and boys' attainment in writing is now in line with the national average.

The broad curriculum engages pupils successfully. It also offers them opportunities to learn about different lifestyles and life choices. However, the sex and relationship curriculum is only provided to pupils in Year 6. Some pupils in other year groups report that opportunities are more limited to learn about life choices around their sexuality, in order to fully appreciate the need to respect and celebrate differences.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Adults are regularly trained and, therefore, understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. For example, staff know that changes in pupils' behaviour could suggest they are at risk or experiencing some form of abuse. The school keeps detailed records that are kept confidential but also used to inform work with external agencies, with whom you work well, seeking advice and support as necessary.

Bullying is rare, which is apparent from the school's own records and the views of both the parents and pupils who made their views known. Parents and pupils are happy that any concerns around behaviour are dealt with immediately and effectively, meaning issues do not persist or become more serious.

The single central record is detailed and accurate and reflects that effective pre-employment checks on all adults are carried out in depth, to ensure that they can be considered safe to work with children.

Inspection findings

- You ensure that pupils make good progress. This is the case in Year 1 to Year 6 and in the early years provision. This is because teaching is consistently good and activities largely meet the needs of pupils well.
- Children enter the early years setting with levels of development that are generally typical for their age. A very high proportion reach a good level of development by the end of Reception and a high proportion exceed this expected standard, meaning children are very well prepared for Year 1. From Year 1 onwards, different groups of pupils continue to do well. This is the case in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as in other subject areas, such as science, history, geography and French.
- However, at times, work does not challenge the most able. This is not the case in all classes but the opportunities for the most able to reach greater depth in their learning are not consistently good. Not enough of most-able pupils exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Other groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Additional funding attracted by these groups is well spent.
- Assessment systems are robust and accurate, meaning pupils' achievement is carefully tracked and underachievement is identified quickly. This has been a key factor in the improvements in pupils' achievement in 2017 for Year 6 and for boys in Year 2.
- Monitoring of teaching is rigorous and leads to effective training opportunities. This enables the quality of teaching to be maintained and further improved upon, leading to generally good outcomes by different groups of learners. Staff appraisal systems link to the robust monitoring of teaching. Targets are clear and challenging. The system also allows teachers to reflect on their own development needs and teachers report that they feel valued because of this.
- Pupils' conduct around school is consistently strong. They need very few reminders about the school's rules and expectations. This means they waste little learning time as they move between activities. Pupils' strong conduct is matched by their positive attitudes to learning. Pupils also feel safe and are safe, thanks to the measures taken to safeguard pupils. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet or within their communities through various activities, which also ensure that there is no discriminatory or extremist behaviour in school.
- Attendance remains a strength and pupils' attendance is above average. This is also the case for different groups of pupils, whose attendance is high compared to their peers nationally. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is much lower than that seen nationally and improving year-on-year. This shows that systems for tracking pupils' attendance, and the work you and your leaders do to engage parents and pupils in understanding the importance of regular attendance are strong.
- Phonics is taught well and this is seen by the consistently high numbers of pupils who succeed in the national phonics screening check in Year 1 and in Year 2.

This is due to very good work to reinforce phonic skills across the curriculum in the early years and in key stage 1. In turn, this supports pupils' ability to read from a young age and to quickly develop a passion for reading and to understand the more complex reading skills as they move through the school.

- The curriculum provides pupils with regular opportunities to reinforce their reading, writing and mathematics skills. It also engages pupils well. The curriculum also offers pupils opportunities to learn about different lifestyles and life choices. For example, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. In this way, you enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their understanding of British values successfully. However, pupils say they would like to learn more about certain life choices people make around their sexuality and report that they do not do this until they are in Year 6. Both you and the governors recognised that this is the case and know this is an aspect of your provision which needs to improve.
- Middle leadership has improved since the last inspection and, as such, the leadership team's capacity has also improved. This has supported better leadership of subject areas, so that pupils are engaged well and develop skills quickly. It also means that monitoring and training of teachers has improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching improves further by ensuring that activities for the most able are consistently strong in all classes, so that these pupils can reach their potential and exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- the curriculum provides pupils with the opportunities to understand the different life choices people make with regard to their sexuality so that they are able to fully appreciate the need to respect and celebrate differences.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona McNally
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited all classes in school to observe teaching and its impact on learning. I also looked at a wide range of pupils' books from all classes, across the various subject areas. I met with five members of the governing body and members of the senior and middle leadership teams, as well as yourself. I looked at the school's information about safeguarding of pupils and examined records around behaviour and bullying, as well as attendance. I also looked at a range of other documents, including your self-evaluation document, the school's development plan and your monitoring information on teachers. I held discussions with two groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2, which also included pupil leaders in school. I met with 10 parents in the playground, as they brought their children to school, to gauge their views of the school and considered the 43 responses to the Ofsted parental online questionnaire, Parent View.