

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 October 2017

Mrs Katharine Buckley
Executive Headteacher
Westcliffe Primary School
Dryden Road
Scunthorpe
Lincolnshire
DN17 1PN

Dear Mrs Buckley

Short inspection of Westcliffe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 June 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, along with all the staff and governors, want to provide the very best education for the pupils in your care and to support their personal development. You are doing both of these things successfully. Pupils achieve well from what, for many, are very low starting points. Along with the effective academic support they receive, you take good care of pupils' personal development and well-being. They are safe and happy at school. Despite a very high staff turnover since the previous inspection, and the many changes in the curriculum and assessment arrangements you have had to establish in that time, you have improved the school effectively, placing the school in a very good position to flourish further. Pupils are very positive about and proud of their school. Parents and carers value the supportive culture that permeates the school, caring for pupils and their families. At the end of Year 6, when pupils leave the school, they are well prepared for their secondary education and have the personal attributes to be successful in their lives.

The school is a lively, well-ordered environment where there is a strong sense of purpose and ambition. Staff celebrate pupils' hard work and successes through engaging displays around the school to motivate others and inspire further achievement. Pupils explain with pride that school is important because 'It will help you in the future when you have to find a good job and have nice things.' Pupils also reiterate that 'Teachers are there to help you so that you can do your best.' Those who find learning a challenge know that if they ask for help, staff will respond promptly. Staff rightly are very proud of their school.

Relationships between staff and pupils are very respectful and trusting. Staff know their pupils well and accommodate individual needs effectively. Pupils know who to go to should they experience any difficulties at school or home or have concerns about their personal well-being or learning. As one pupil expressed with delight: 'I love school. It is fun to be here. Teachers make lessons interesting and do so much to help us get it right.'

You and your staff have made sure that the decline in pupils' achievements in 2016 was not replicated this year by improving teaching and learning. All school leaders, including governors, check pupils' progress very closely to make sure that pupils stay on track to achieve well. The results of tests and assessments in 2017 improved substantially for all pupils throughout the school, demonstrating that you took the right actions to address the weaknesses from 2016. You ensure that staff have a clear understanding of what you are trying to achieve and their role in securing rapid school improvement. You have high expectations of all staff and pupils and you make sure that everyone has the support they need to achieve their targets. Staff have access to good training to extend their skills. For example, new initiatives have been taken to improve pupils' reading and writing and to make sure that all the assessments staff make of pupils' progress are accurate and reliable, so as to inform their planning to challenge pupils appropriately. A strong sense of teamwork prevails among staff. Classroom practice is consistently good and improving because leaders know what constitutes high-quality teaching and support staff effectively.

Governors are very committed to the school and the community it serves. You keep them fully informed about the school's performance and they have the skills and expertise to identify strengths and areas for improvement. They examine pupils' progress information meticulously and ask searching questions regarding the data staff present to illustrate pupils' achievements at regular intervals. Their understanding of performance data is comprehensive in overseeing pupils' progress and they do not shy away from their responsibilities to challenge leaders where pupils fall short of their targets. Governors have been pivotal in the rapid strides the school has made to improve in the last year because they have a clear understanding of their role as governors in every respect. They ask relevant questions to probe the effect of the actions leaders take to make improvements and check that all staff fulfil their roles to a high standard.

As headteacher, you know what you want for the pupils and you are unequivocal in what you expect from staff. You are leading school improvement relentlessly because you believe nothing but the best is acceptable. You check closely that the actions you initiate have the effect they should. Your senior leaders play their part effectively in supporting developments. All subject and phase leaders understand their responsibilities for improving teaching and learning in the areas they oversee. Everyone is clear about what is being asked of them and know that you will support them in their efforts. The strong focus on improving teaching to accommodate revisions in the curriculum, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, has led to improved outcomes for all pupils. The checks on pupils' progress have improved markedly since 2016. These show, however, that some boys, particularly among the lower-attaining pupils, do not make the same rates of progress as other pupils in the school in all subjects. While, generally, much has improved since the previous inspection, these pupils do not achieve as well as they should, particularly in writing.

Provision for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. You and your leaders check their progress frequently to make sure that the support they receive is effective in meeting their needs. Staff modify individual learning programmes regularly if progress is not sufficiently rapid. This level of attention ensures that these pupils make the progress they should. The school seeks expertise from other agencies where necessary to serve these pupils' needs as successfully as possible. Parents praise this level of personalised support for their children.

An area for improvement from the previous inspection was to increase the challenge for the most able pupils. The school's in-house data from 2017 shows that some pupils are now working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion is not as high as that found nationally because the starting points for most pupils are very low. However, there is strong evidence to indicate that teachers have raised their expectations of all pupils and the level of challenge has increased. Work in pupils' books and around the school shows that pupils enjoy working on topics that captivate their interest and enthusiasm to know more. For example, pupils talk excitedly about Vikings and Saxons and how they ruled and conquered, 'in the olden days' as one explained, totally spellbound by being able to handle a 'massive axe'. Your expectations of pupils are high. Pupils show that they are happy to undertake activities that deepen their knowledge and understanding. The performance of the girls generally is stronger than that of the boys in reading and writing, but boys outperform girls in mathematics. You have identified this disparity as an area for further improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, and all staff and governors, ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Keeping pupils safe is a high priority. All staff understand their duty of care responsibilities. You check that pupils arrive safely each day and record any concerns, especially about the most vulnerable pupils, in detail and to a high quality to safeguard their well-being. Staff know to report any concerns they may have about any child to the relevant leaders in the school. Leaders, including the school liaison officer, work with outside agencies and initiate urgent action if any concerns arise at home or school. You deal with issues sensitively to maintain the trusting relationships the school has with parents and pupils. Through regular training, all staff have a secure understanding of current safeguarding guidance and procedures. Leaders ensure that all pre-employment checks on adults working in the school meet statutory requirements fully.

Safeguarding practice is effective and parents are reminded of their responsibilities for keeping children safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils know what to do if they feel unsafe and know who to go to if they are worried or upset. Leaders make sure that pupils receive regular reminders on how to stay safe outside school and how to deal with any emergencies that might arise. Pupils are particularly made aware of the dangers posed by social media sites. They explained knowledgeably that: 'You mustn't put personal details on the internet or photographs because strangers might use these in a bad way to hurt you.' Governors conduct all necessary checks on safeguarding and site security regularly.

Inspection findings

- As you know, the inspection examined the key lines of enquiry that we agreed at the start of the inspection. The first of these was checking the quality of the school's procedures to measure pupils' progress to ensure that all pupils had the opportunity to achieve well and that the most able pupils were challenged appropriately. You explained that, in 2016, pupils' outcomes were not as good as the school would have wanted because the school was not up to speed with the revisions in the curriculum and the expectations within the new tests and assessments. You instigated extensive training for all staff to secure consistency across the school in the way they planned their teaching and assessed pupils' progress. This has resulted in better practice throughout. Pupils' outcomes are now more closely aligned with those of pupils nationally. In-house checks of pupils' progress have increased teachers' confidence in the accuracy of the information leaders gather and how this should be used to plan learning. Leaders have a full and accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning and the accuracy of teachers' assessments. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, with pockets of very strong practice in every key stage. Staff know the targets their pupils have to achieve and that they will be held to account in making sure that pupils achieve these. As a result, pupils are now making good progress throughout, including in the early years.
- You make sure that governors and leaders conduct regular pupil progress meetings to check that all pupils are making good progress. If there are any gaps, you initiate additional support so that their progress is accelerated effectively. This has not been as consistently successful in accelerating the progress of lower-attaining boys, including among the disadvantaged group, particularly in writing.
- I looked closely at the progress and achievement of lower-attaining pupils, particularly in reading and writing among the boys. Your analysis of current pupils' progress shows that the performance of these lower-attaining pupils has a clear effect on the school's overall outcomes in reading and writing. Lower-attaining pupils did not make sufficient progress because, previously, assessments were not as frequent as they needed to be. As a result, the progress of these pupils was not strong and differences between their attainment and that of others did not diminish quickly enough. Among these lower-attaining boys, many are also disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so have to contend with a range of barriers to their learning. You have plans in hand to address this.
- You have organised additional support to help these groups of pupils make good progress in all their learning, but with an added emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading and writing. With the high focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills and promoting a love of reading and vocabulary across the school, pupils' reading and writing skills are improving rapidly. The support includes extra time to listen to pupils reading and extend their confidence in writing at speed but with accuracy and fluency. Boys in the school particularly find it difficult to sustain interest and concentration when writing, but the school has seen flashes of success where topics have caught pupils' imagination. I looked at the work samples you provided to show that pupils are now making better progress in their writing and being particularly adventurous in using a wider vocabulary to make their compositions more interesting. From the work I saw, pupils, particularly those who are less fluent, while they find writing a challenge, are

beginning to try new ideas with greater confidence. The difference between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils is not wide generally. It is only the lower-attaining pupils who still need to progress more speedily, particularly in writing.

- One of the other aspects of the school's performance I looked at in greater depth was pupils' attendance and the rates of persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, these pupils had attendance that was in the lowest 10% nationally and persistent absence that was in the highest 10% nationally. Your procedures to monitor attendance, punctuality and cases of persistent absence are thorough. Your attendance data for the 2016/17 academic year shows that attendance rose to the national average. Most pupils have very high rates of attendance. Persistent absence has also fallen to being almost in line with the national average. Leaders do all that they can to encourage parents to send their children to school every day and to arrive on time. Pupils and parents value the rewards they receive for their good efforts.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading in 2016 at the end of Year 6 were not as strong as in previous years so I looked at the teaching of reading more closely. The teaching of phonics that begins in the early years is systematic and effective. Practice continues to be good at key stage 1 and pupils develop confidence in their skills through daily practice, with adults to support them. You have made sure that teachers in all classes give a higher priority to developing pupils' understanding of texts and vocabulary, as this was a weakness in 2016, particularly among lower-attaining pupils. Teachers probe pupils' precise understanding of words and phrases more emphatically and pupils enjoy exploring the stories and poems they read. One pupil explained: 'I really love poems because they rhyme and can be all sorts of shapes. I like making words rhyme a lot!'
- The teaching of writing has improved in the last year and the pupils love the opportunity to learn new vocabulary and incorporate it more liberally in their writing. However, while outcomes in writing at the end of key stage 2 moved closer to the national average in 2017, you recognise that there is further work to do. Pupils are taught the basic skills of grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting systematically from an early age. However, they do not consistently apply this learning in their writing and make careless errors too frequently. These errors detract from the quality of work pupils could produce, given their current work on exploring vocabulary and texts at greater depth. This area needs further improvement.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the timed tests and challenges they undertake to increase their mental agility. Teachers make sure that pupils develop their numeracy skills step by step, building on previous learning and deepening their understanding so that they can apply what they learn more confidently when working independently to solve problems. Pupils make good progress and the most able are challenged well to work at greater depth.
- You have established high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most behave well at all times. Occasionally, a few become restless or passive and inattentive if teaching fails to hold their interest. Staff manage such lapses well. Pupils are quick to help others, showing kindness and affection when they find their friends are upset or unhappy. They talk about fundamental British values with a mature understanding of what these constitute in their everyday lives, for example following school rules and showing

tolerance and respect towards others. Many face considerable challenges outside school and so value the stability and support staff provide and enjoy the friendships they develop at school.

- Pupils speak highly of all staff and all that teachers do to help them. The many clubs, trips and residential visits the school offers enrich pupils' learning and develop their understanding of the wider world and their awareness of different cultures and traditions. Pupils benefit from a rich programme of sporting activities and opportunities to develop their musical talents by learning to play an instrument. Parents who presented their views during the inspection said that the school was 'brilliant' and teachers did a very good job. Most parents said, 'We have no complaints – couldn't wish for a better school for my kids.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils who are lower attaining, including those among the disadvantaged group and boys, receive the help they need to achieve more, particularly in their writing
- pupils apply their basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in their writing in order to improve the quality of their work
- plans to address the identified disparities in boys' and girls' progress are implemented effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors, senior leaders and other staff. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I analysed a range of documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We considered your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I observed pupils around the school and in their classes. Together with your senior leaders, I observed a number of parts of lessons throughout the day, visited all classes and observed small group work. I looked at books, spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with pupils to get their views of the school. I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of the 22

responses submitted by parents to Parent View. There were no responses submitted to the Ofsted online staff survey.