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Mr Steven Potter
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Dear Mr Potter

Short inspection of Westbourne Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and are alert to those areas that require further development. Leaders make skilful use of information about pupils' learning to implement strategies that will accelerate their achievement. Recent developments have successfully improved outcomes in reading and mathematics. You are now rightly turning your attention to writing, where pupils' progress has slowed.

Teachers offer a curriculum that broadens pupils' horizons but also makes use of the richness of the school's locality. Recently, for example, pupils wrote persuasively to a local farmer about battery farming. Their letters resulted in the opportunity to 'rescue' two chickens, who now roam freely during the school day. The school enriches pupils' learning with a wide range of visits to support topics, and many after-school activities. Clubs are very well attended and encourage all pupils to develop their talents.

Pupils are proud to belong to the school and play an active role in its smooth running. A representative school council makes decisions that benefit others, such as the new 'reading shed' that will open during breaktimes. Year 5 pupils tend the allotment, and they join Year 6 in having opportunities to act as peer mentors for younger pupils. Pupils say that because 'everybody knows everybody' it means that incidents are 'very, very rare'. Positive attitudes help to ensure that attendance is

better than in other schools nationally.

More than half of the parents responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View. Almost all responses are highly supportive. Many parents commented on your welcoming presence at the gate at the beginning and end of each day, which helps the school to have close links with families. Parents praise how well all staff show care for their children's well-being. Parents value the way in which their children develop socially, emotionally and academically. One parent was typical of many in stating, 'the ethos of the school ensures that every child reaches their true potential both through and beyond the curriculum,' adding the view that, 'the school continues to improve immeasurably'.

Pupils understand that making a mistake in their work is an opportunity to learn something new. They enjoy talking about their learning by testing out new ideas and finding solutions. Right from children's start in Reception, teachers encourage them to give a reason when answering a question. Pupils are also learning to be independent. In Year 4, pupils sensibly self-check their calculations for accuracy. They readily seek help when they are stuck and move on to greater challenge when work becomes too easy. Teachers offer same-day support to pupils who are stuck in their learning. Extra teaching is purposeful and helps pupils to overcome barriers to their learning, especially in reading and mathematics.

All of the staff feel the school has improved since the last inspection. Staff are encouraged to be innovative in ways that are right for pupils. Teachers appreciate their professional training, such as developing skills to improve pupils' interest and confidence in mathematics. Many pupils told me that this is now their favourite subject.

Governors support and challenge you because they have high ambitions for pupils. They are increasingly able to hold leaders to account for ongoing improvements. They know how to use different sources of information to ask questions and evaluate the school's progress.

Almost all pupils enter the school with skills that are at, or just below, those typical for their age. They make rapid progress across the different areas of learning so that, by the end of Reception, a high proportion achieve a good level of development. Effective teaching in phonics has ensured that pupils achieve well, which supports them to make strong progress in reading by the end of Year 6. Progress in mathematics is in line with other schools nationally. In recent years, progress in writing has dipped, and is below average. Evidence seen during the inspection supports leaders' analysis that current pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics.

Pupils' writing development presents a more varied picture, and the drive for progress is less evident. Writing skills are not consistently developed and practised. Work is not well matched to the abilities of all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is at the top of their agenda at all times. You are passionate in your belief that pupils learn best when they feel safe. All staff understand their responsibilities and they are well trained to fulfil them.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Governors maintain an overview of safeguarding procedures, checking them regularly. Staff follow through any concerns tenaciously, working closely with parents and other professionals. Your office team follows through any unexplained absence to ensure that pupils are safe and they return to school quickly.

Almost all parents find it easy to talk to you or one of the teachers if they have a concern. Pupils say that they feel safe at school, including in the playground. Key stage 2 pupils say that incidents between pupils are 'very, very rare'. None of them could recall any bullying, although they know what to do if it occurs and trust any adult to sort it out. Pupils look out for each other's welfare and take responsibility for others' well-being. One pupil told me that, 'Anyone in school will help if you have a problem – any adult or any pupil.'

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked at what leaders are doing to improve teaching and learning; how their actions enable pupils to make good progress in writing; and how well the school meets the needs of the small number of disadvantaged pupils.
- Since your arrival at the school and the appointment of the deputy headteacher, you have built a committed and skilled leadership team which is dedicated to improving pupils' outcomes. Team members understand the school's priorities and make a strong contribution to implement actions that improve teaching and learning. They are knowledgeable about their responsibility areas and provide other teachers with advice and training. Leaders work alongside teachers, such as when they are newer to the profession.
- The school's longer-term development priority has been to improve mathematics, putting in a significant investment of leaders' time and support for teaching and learning. While improvements to mathematics need to be embedded, more impetus now needs to go into writing.
- School improvement planning carefully records leaders' ideas but it lacks sharp focus. Better use could be made of leaders' analysis of their monitoring information to manage fewer priorities with greater clarity. You agreed with me that a more focused plan to develop writing would help to secure more rapid improvement.
- Teachers support pupils to develop as writers by sharing memorable stories that pupils then use to create their own examples. With ideas already in their heads, pupils find it easier to write with fluency. Teachers also give pupils opportunities to write at length across the broader curriculum, which supports the most able

pupils to make adventurous choices of vocabulary.

- Pupils do not effectively apply their writing skills as effectively when they write independently. However, they do become increasingly adept in checking their work for spelling and grammatical features that make writing more descriptive. Pupils' workbooks show that pupils do not edit work as their writing develops in order to improve its appeal to the reader.
- Learning tasks in writing are not consistently well matched for lower-attaining pupils. Expectations, including for presentation, are not consistently high enough for the most able. Consequently, these pupil groups are not making rapid enough progress.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding thoughtfully to ensure that the small number of disadvantaged pupils achieve well. Extra teaching helps them to address any gaps in learning, including for the most able. Consequently, a few disadvantaged pupils are now working at a greater depth of understanding. Differences between the progress of disadvantaged and other pupils are narrowing in reading and mathematics.
- A few disadvantaged pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their books show that the work they are given in writing is not consistently tailored to their needs to help them to make good progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school improvement planning is sharpened to give clarity to leaders' actions to improve pupils' writing
- teachers plan learning that more precisely matches pupils' starting points in writing so that their progress accelerates.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited your school for one day. I met with you, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics, four members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I talked to 12 key stage 2 pupils on the playground and toured part of the school with a further four pupils. I visited almost all classes with the headteacher. I reviewed a sample of pupils' books in English

and mathematics, as well as a wide range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, governing body minutes, information on the school's website, the single central record of recruitment checks, attendance information and pupils' performance information. I took account of 114 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including 79 free-text responses. There were 17 staff responses to their questionnaire, and two pupil questionnaire responses which I considered along with the views that pupils gave me on the day. I also spoke to 10 parents at the start of the school day.