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Mrs Julie Martin
Headteacher
Westwood Primary School
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Dear Mrs Martin

Short inspection of Westwood Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2018, 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

With the support of a dedicated deputy headteacher, you provide strong leadership for the school. You have high expectations of your staff and have not hesitated to deal with underperformance. Morale among the staff is high and relationships are good. You have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school development plan is detailed. It includes clear targets for raising standards in English and mathematics and a precise timescale for checking how well you are progressing towards those targets. The action plans for the other subjects, however, lack detail and do not show how the planned actions will improve children's learning.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to: improve teaching in mathematics; ensure that higher-ability pupils make faster progress; give pupils more time for independent work; and improve the partnership with parents and carers.

You have appointed a new leader for mathematics who is approaching his work with rigour and determination. He has introduced a new scheme of work for the subject and arranged a programme of appropriate in-service training for his colleagues. You

have also made changes to the deployment of staff, in order to compensate for historical weaknesses in teaching. This work is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' performance. This is seen in the improved results in 2017 and in the work of pupils currently in the school. However, since the last inspection, mathematics results at both key stages have fluctuated considerably. The progress made by the pupils who left the school last summer was significantly below average.

The results for the most able pupils have also been inconsistent across subjects and key stages over the last four years. In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of most-able pupils who gained greater depth of understanding in key stage 1 was below or well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. At key stage 2, results for most-able pupils have been better. The work in books indicates that the most able pupils currently in the school are making more consistent progress. However, in two of the lessons visited, the most able pupils were doing work that was well below their abilities.

You have been very successful in increasing the opportunities for pupils to work independently. Visits to lessons showed that this is an integral element of teaching and learning in the school. You have also succeeded in involving parents more closely in their children's learning. A recent survey that you conducted shows that 93% of parents feel involved in decisions about their children's learning. All the parents who spoke to me, and the great majority of those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, were very positive about the school.

The governors are knowledgeable and committed. Through regular visits to lessons, and by sharing their findings, they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governors hold you rigorously to account and keep themselves well informed about the performance of other staff in the school. They ensure that the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and to develop physical education and sports in the school is used well. They agreed that the plans for these areas do not have specific targets against which the precise impact of the additional funding can be assessed.

A weakness that you have identified in the school is the underperformance of boys compared to girls. You have adopted a range of strategies to improve the attitudes of boys to their learning. These are having a positive impact, although results still show a mismatch between boys' and girls' performance. In the lessons visited, the attention levels of boys, especially in key stage 1, were less good than those of the girls. The behaviour of pupils around the school is good. They relate well to each other and to adults and they take great pride in the attractive environment which has been created and very carefully maintained by the site manager.

We agreed that the outcomes for your pupils have been inconsistent over the last four years. Although these have improved of late, further work will be necessary to consolidate those improvements.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your records are up to date and detailed.

You have rigorous systems for checking on the suitability of adults in the school to work with children. All staff and governors have received the required training in safeguarding. Staff know how to identify possible signs of abuse and what to do if they have any concerns about the safety of a child. You work with a range of agencies to provide support for children and families who need additional help.

The pupils I spoke to said that they are happy and safe in school, but not all feel safe on the way to and from school. They have been taught about road safety but not how to keep themselves safe near railway lines. Through regular practices, they learn what to do and where to go in the case of a fire. They also know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media. They said that bullying does occur, but teachers deal with this promptly and successfully. The pupils know the people they should contact if they have any worries and they are confident that they will receive the help they need. These positive views reflect those of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire and those I met during the inspection.

Inspection findings

- We discussed results in the early years. These declined from 2014 to 2016, but improved the following year. Your analysis shows that these improvements are being maintained.
- Phonics results declined from 2015 to 2017 and the gap between the school's performance and that found nationally widened. I was interested to know what the school is doing about this. Among the approaches you are taking is to provide two phonics sessions a day for those pupils who need particular help. Your analysis of the performance of pupils currently in Year 1 shows that standards are improving, but boys' performance is still lagging behind that of the girls.
- Results in key stage 1 have also declined in recent years. For two years, reading results were in the bottom 20% of schools nationally. They improved in 2017, but were still below average. Mathematics results have alternated between being above and being below average. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was above average. However, the proportion achieving greater depth of understanding was below average. In our discussions, you were able to show me that the performance of pupils currently in key stage 1 is improving. However, there is still further work to be done to consolidate these improvements.
- The attainment of pupils at key stage 2 has been inconsistent. Writing results were above average each year from 2014 to 2017. Reading results fell to below average in 2016 but improved to above average the following year. Mathematics results also fell in 2016. Although they improved in 2017, they remained below average. I was interested to know about the performance of pupils currently in key stage 2. You showed me that, in most year groups, performance is

improving. However, Year 4 pupils are not doing as well as they should, mainly because of the quality of the teaching they have received in the past. You have moved the deputy headteacher to work with this class and to help them make up for their lack of progress in previous years.

- Pupils' attendance has generally been good at your school. However, in 2015, the attendance of pupils entitled to free school meals and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was worse than average. It improved the following year. Because of this, I asked you to provide me with the attendance figures for this year and last year. These showed that 2015 was an exceptional year. Since then, the attendance of these two groups of pupils, as well as of the rest of the school population, has been, and continues to be, above average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements in outcomes are consolidated, so that results for pupils and groups of pupils are at least average in both key stages and in each subject
- the performance of boys improves across the school, so that they consistently perform at least as well as boys across the country
- teachers provide the most able pupils with consistently high challenges, so that they reach the standards and make the progress that they should
- all plans include precise targets which can be used to measure the extent to which the actions taken are leading to improvements in pupils' learning
- pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe near railway lines.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher and with the leaders for English, mathematics and computing. I met six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority. You and I visited lessons to observe teaching and look at books. I discussed safeguarding, behaviour and attendance with you. I met a group of eight pupils from Years 3 to 6 and listened to pupils reading. I spoke to 10 parents as they brought their children to school and examined the 55 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I examined a range of documentation, including your self-evaluation and school development plan.