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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Dunnico
Headteacher
Thomas Jolyffe Primary School
Clopton Road
Stratford-upon-Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 6TE

Dear Mrs Dunnico

Short inspection of Thomas Jolyffe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 September 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.**

You took up the post as headteacher in January 2017 and quickly identified inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Your purposeful leadership provides a revitalised direction for the school. Actions that you have taken are leading to gradual improvements to the quality of teaching. However, some actions are in the early stages and need to be embedded to see the full impact on pupils' progress. Due to circumstances beyond your control, several leaders and teachers left the school in the summer term 2017. Recruiting and inducting new staff have understandably taken significant focus and have been managed well.

You and the staff provide a welcoming ethos for pupils and parents. Relationships are very positive between staff and pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and work hard in lessons. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of support from staff and leaders. Comments included: 'Staff are always smiling,' and 'Communication is good; there is an open-door policy.'

The senior leadership team has several new members, including the deputy headteacher who started in September 2017. You have gelled quickly as a team and staff are supportive of the key changes that are taking place. You evaluate strengths and weaknesses accurately and improvement plans focus on appropriate

priorities. However, improvement plans do not identify specific timescales of actions, nor how the success of actions will be measured. Greater precision will enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of their work more effectively.

You have responded positively to a key area for improvement from the previous inspection report. Middle leaders are now more accountable to improving teaching and evaluating pupils' progress. Your cycle of monitoring enables leaders to carry out regular checks on teaching and provide precise feedback to teachers. As a result, inconsistent teaching is gradually reducing.

You have put in place consistent strategies to develop the quality of teaching. These strategies provide a positive shared language for learning among staff and pupils. Some strategies have been implemented over a longer period, so have had more impact. For example, when planning their ideas for writing, pupils work in groups to re-tell their stories using actions and spoken word. Pupils enjoy this approach and it helps them to be imaginative in the planning stages of writing. Importantly, pupils' progress in writing shows positively in their books.

Another area for improvement from the previous inspection report was to ensure that teachers match work to pupils' needs, so that pupils are provided with effective challenge. You and the deputy headteacher identified that the school's assessment system was not fit for purpose. In a short space of time, you have addressed this and teachers' assessments are now accurate. Teachers also have a better understanding of where pupils need to be challenged to meet the demands of the curriculum. However, challenge for low- and middle-attaining pupils still needs further work, particularly in mathematics and reading.

The governing body has also gone through significant changes. Many of the new governors elected into post in the last 12 months have significant educational expertise. They are astute and well aware of weaknesses that have arisen in the school. Governors provide challenge to leaders. However, they acknowledge that they have not been evaluating the pupil premium funding effectively enough. As a result, they do not know which strategies are the most successful.

Parents and pupils speak positively about the wider curriculum on offer. Staff plan exciting and imaginative topics, so that pupils are captivated by the learning. As a result, pupils' understanding is developed well across different subject areas. For example, in Year 4, pupils spoke knowledgeably about their learning in history. Pupils were immersed in their topic day on the 'Romans' by dressing up in Roman costume and learning from an expert historian. Some parents also spoke about how much pupils in Year 2 enjoyed their 'Fire of London' topic through a safe re-enactment carried out with model houses on the playground.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. You and the safeguarding leads meet regularly to evaluate the safety and well-being of particular

pupils. Concerns about pupils are followed up tenaciously. Record-keeping is meticulous. You have also ensured that staff are updated regularly and receive appropriate training. Consequently, staff understand their responsibilities well and act swiftly if they are concerned about a pupil.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Staff put in place a range of activities in the curriculum, so that pupils' understanding of safety progresses as they move through school. Pupils spoke confidently about the meaning of bullying. They were clear that they would talk to a trusted adult if they experienced bullying. Pupils also know how to stay safe online and were clear about why it is important not to share personal information across the internet.

Inspection findings

- We focused on the level of support and challenge that low- and middle-prior-attaining pupils receive in reading and mathematics. In 2016 in key stage 1 and in 2017 in key stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards was not high enough. It is important to highlight that in the Year 6 cohort that left last year, just over half of them had been at the school since Reception. Movement of pupils in and out of the school is relatively high in all years. Outcomes improved in 2017 in key stage 1 and a higher proportion of pupils achieved the expected standards at the end of Year 2. However, there is still action required to ensure that low- and middle-prior-attaining pupils are supported or challenged consistently. For example, in mathematics sometimes, pupils' answers to reasoning problems do not demonstrate a depth of understanding. There are also other examples, such as pupils finding calculation questions too easy or lower-ability pupils not receiving the support required to understand tricky mathematical concepts.
- Phonics teaching in the early years and key stage 1 is effective. The proportion reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check has improved over the last three years. In 2017, at the end of key stage 2 the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading was not high enough. You have adapted the approaches to reading. Pupils are reading widely, often because staff are taking more time to hear pupils read individually. Investment in reading books and the new whole-class book focus have created a new sense of excitement among the pupils. The follow-up activities for whole-class reading sessions are interesting and help to develop pupils' understanding of texts. Comprehension skills now need to be fully embedded into the teaching of reading, so that pupils are consistently challenged and their progress accelerates.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress needs to be accelerated across the school. You have rightly identified this as a key priority in your school improvement plan. The allocation for pupil premium spending for the current academic year has precise and targeted strategies. Historically, this has not been the case, which has slowed down the rate of disadvantaged pupils' progress. Leaders and governors are not evaluating the impact of the strategies precisely enough. This needs to be addressed, so that you can identify where strategies are having the most successful impact on disadvantaged pupils.

- Over the last three academic years, the number of fixed-term exclusions has been above the national average. You and I explored this and there were valid reasons for the exclusions. There are some pupils who have complex behavioural and emotional needs. Pupils with additional needs are extremely well supported in school. They are also reintegrated well after an exclusion. This support is having a positive impact and, so far this academic year, exclusions have reduced significantly. Central to this success is the thoughtful nurture provision. Pupils who require additional emotional and social support receive individualised sessions, so that they are settled and ready to learn.
- Last academic year, attendance declined and was below the national average. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school regularly enough. You analyse the attendance of individuals and put in place appropriate support for families. This is starting to have an impact. So far this academic year, overall attendance is higher. However, attendance rates of different groups of pupils and overall attendance need to be analysed more effectively. This will enable leaders to take swift action and continue to improve attendance rates.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupil premium strategies for disadvantaged pupils are precisely targeted and evaluated for impact
- absence rates for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils are analysed effectively and swiftly acted upon
- teaching is consistently challenging for middle- and lower-attaining pupils in reading and mathematics
- reading comprehension skills are deeply embedded into the teaching of reading
- improvement plans have clear timescales for actions and clear criteria of how actions will be measured for success.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Meckin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other leaders. I also met with three governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to

eight lessons with you and looked at pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered 59 free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the responses from the online questionnaire completed by pupils and staff.

I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. We discussed the national test results and assessments undertaken by pupils in 2016 and 2017. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.