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Mrs Judith Ward
Headteacher
Race Leys Infant School
Hurst Road
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Dear Mrs Ward

Short inspection of Race Leys Infant 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

You, along with your deputy headteachers, governors and staff, have created a positive and ambitious culture. Learning for all is central to the ethos of the school. Consequently, pupils make good progress, staff benefit from a range of developmental opportunities and parents and carers are encouraged to take part in activities with their children at the school so they can support learning at home. The way that staff work with parents is a strength of the school.

Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. They lead by example and they have created a culture of respect where everyone is valued. The positive relationships between leaders, staff, pupils and parents support the good progress that the pupils make.

Pupils work well with each other and staff use praise and encouragement, along with clear next-steps, to help pupils make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to consistently check pupils' progress, so they pick up on their misconceptions and deal with them quickly. This helps pupils to maintain their levels of concentration so that learning does not slow down.

Teachers give feedback in line with the school's assessment policy and pupils use this to improve their work. Pupils are given opportunities to tackle difficult work in a range of subjects, including the 'tricky challenges' in mathematics. This is helping them think more deeply about subjects and develop greater resilience to overcome challenging activities.

There is some very strong teaching in the school, particularly in Year 2 and in Reception. Where teaching is most effective, activities are carefully planned and well-resourced to allow pupils to make rapid progress from their different starting points. Staff model what they want pupils to do and they use questions well to check understanding and deepen thinking. However, not all teaching matches the best that can be found in the school.

The teaching of reading and phonics is a strength. Pupils read widely and often and there is a strong reading culture in the school. Pupils make rapid progress in phonics and reading and consistently achieve standards above the national averages.

Most pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics and attainment is improving, although it remains below the national average. Overall, boys' writing still does not match the quality of that produced by girls. In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of boys who reached the expected standard in writing was below the national average.

Disadvantaged pupils make similarly strong progress to other pupils. They have achieved well in science and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is improving. However, overall attainment still does not match that of other pupils nationally.

Pupils behave well and respond positively to the school's values. They have a clear understanding of fundamental British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are proud of their school and they are happy to take on responsibilities. They serve as register, library and assembly monitors and some are 'play rangers' who encourage activities during social time. There is also an active school council.

Pupils also enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities which provide opportunities to develop new interests and skills. The physical education and sport premium funding is used particularly well to encourage all pupils to take part in wide range of physical activities.

Attendance has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now similar to the national average. Most pupils have excellent attendance but a few are absent too often.

Staff work very well with parents to the benefit of the pupils. Positive relationships and regular communication help pupils to do their best in school. Some parents are involved in development planning and the learning mentor is proactive in working with those who find it more difficult to come into school. Parents who made their views known during the inspection were very positive about the school and a very large majority would recommend it to another parent.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective as there is a strong culture for keeping children safe throughout the school. Leaders ensure that all staff are vigilant about the welfare of pupils by making sure that they are well trained and kept up to date about safeguarding issues. Staff are very clear about their safeguarding responsibilities and rapid action is taken if required.

Referrals are timely and outside agencies are used appropriately. Leaders and staff are tenacious in following up concerns. The learning mentor also provides high-quality early help to families.

Processes for reporting concerns are clear and known by all staff. The school's single central record is compliant and procedures to recruit, select and check staff are appropriate. Records are stored securely.

Pupils, staff and parents believe that pupils are safe and there are robust systems within the school to keep pupils safe. The site is secure and pupils are taught to stay safe in an age-appropriate way. For example, pupils are taught about online safety and healthy relationships.

Pupils understand what bullying is but raised no concerns during the inspection. Pupils and parents are confident that staff would act quickly and effectively if pupils were unkind to each other.

Inspection findings

- Teaching continues to improve and the areas for development identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. There is some very strong practice in the school but not all teaching is of the highest standard. Where teaching is less effective, staff do not plan activities that allow pupils to make rapid progress from their different starting points.
- The early years provision is strong and improving. Staff work well together for the benefit of the children within a vibrant learning environment. The curriculum builds upon children's interests and allows them to access high-quality learning, both inside and outside the classroom.
- Children in Reception have positive attitudes to learning and they make rapid progress from their different starting points. Over time, an increasing proportion have reached a good level of development and, as a result of well-informed interventions, more children are ready to thrive in Year 1.
- In common with the rest of the school, early years staff work very well with parents. Communication is of a high quality and opportunities to help parents to understand how they can support learning at home are helping to support the progress that children make. 'Stay and play' sessions are also well attended.
- Over time, pupils have made slower progress in writing than in other subjects and attainment has been below the national average. Consequently, leaders

have ensured that there has been a clear focus on improving writing throughout the school. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their writing skills in a range of subjects and targeted intervention is in place to help those who need to make faster progress. As a result, outcomes in writing have improved throughout the school and current pupils are making good progress. The gap between the standard of boys' writing and the national average is reducing but the overall quality of boys' writing still does not match that produced by girls.

- Since the last inspection, disadvantaged pupils have made similar progress to other pupils in the school. Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to help disadvantaged pupils make faster progress than other pupils nationally. However, although differences are diminishing, disadvantaged pupils still attain less well than other pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching consistently matches the best that can be found in the school
- all staff use information about what pupils know and can do in order to plan activities that allow all groups of pupils to make rapid progress from their different starting points
- strategies to improve the standard of writing across the school are firmly embedded to ensure that outcomes continue to improve for all pupils, particularly boys
- action is taken to further reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally.

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

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers and other leaders and staff. Eighteen responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

The inspector spoke to three governors, including the chair of the governing

body.

Short visits were made to every classroom and the inspector spoke to pupils formally and informally. Eight responses to the pupil questionnaire were considered and behaviour was observed in lessons and during social time.

The 25 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the accompanying 16 free-text comments were considered. The inspector also spoke to parents at the start of the day.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the inspector looked at published information on the school's website.