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Ms Helen Carpenter  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Carpenter

### **Short inspection of Westgate Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 2012.

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 and other leaders have continued to keep the mental health and general well-being of the pupils in your care as the highest priority. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the pastoral support their children receive from the school. Your knowledge of all your pupils, of their backgrounds and their abilities, is very good. You aim to give pupils experiences across a broad curriculum. Statutory assessment information and your own school assessments show that pupils make average progress in reading and mathematics over their time in school. However, you have rightly identified that significant improvements are needed in the progress that pupils make in writing, and in the writing skills that they leave school with. The direction that leaders give to teachers and teaching assistants, and the direction and support that is subsequently given to pupils, has not been precise or consistent enough to bring about the improvements that you know are needed.

At the last inspection, writing was identified as an area for improvement. You were asked to ensure that all pupils consistently make as much progress in writing as they do in reading. You were asked to reinforce pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence structure in other subjects and provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length and for different purposes. Leaders were disappointed with the 2017 Year 6 outcomes in writing, where pupils' progress and attainment

were well below national averages. Writing is highlighted on your school improvement plan this year, and the English leader and governors explain that this has been a focus for the last couple of years.

When children start school in the early years, adults make sure that they have clear direction and many opportunities to develop their early writing skills. For example, adults link teaching sounds in phonics directly to writing and spelling. They model writing well, and then provide exciting opportunities for pupils to develop these skills independently, in activities inside and outdoors. Consequently, many children confidently use phonics to have a go at writing words and are proud of their work.

Throughout the rest of school, teachers give pupils opportunities to write in different styles across different subjects. However, pupils' current work in writing and school assessment information show that pupils are not making good enough progress, particularly throughout key stage 2. Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of the quality of work that pupils produce, and as a result, many pupils do not take care in producing work to be proud of. The lead teacher for English has undertaken helpful work to support teachers in knowing what is expected by the end of each year group. However, it is too soon to see the effect of this work on pupils' outcomes. The lead teacher has accurately identified some weaknesses in writing through looking at pupils' work. He has informed teachers of aspects that are not strong enough, but little improvement can be seen in pupils' books as a result of this work, and checks to make sure that these aspects have improved are not frequent. In addition, information on the school improvement plan is not precise or detailed enough to ensure that everyone knows what they need to do to help pupils make stronger progress in writing.

Outcomes in grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of Year 6 compare favourably to the national average. The work of current Year 6 pupils shows similar attention to these skills. Leaders' direction to make specific aspects of spelling, grammar and punctuation non-negotiable in each year group comes through in pupils' work in some classes, but in others these errors are often not picked up on and so not improved.

Adults in school value pupils' views. They make sure that pupils have several means of expressing their opinions and ideas. Adults listen carefully and consider these views, using them to inform their plans for improvement, such as introducing physical activities on the playground, and charity fundraising activities.

Leaders are receptive to direction and advice. They value the collaborative work that they take part in across their learning alliance of local schools. They are confident in the support offered by the local authority school improvement partner in this work, which has included developing the skills of middle leaders and teaching assistants. School leaders have shared some of their good practice with other schools, such as their work in mathematics. The school improvement partner agrees that leaders now need specific, focused support in developing pupils' writing.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding is effective and well understood by everyone. All records and systems are fit for purpose. Leaders make sure that safeguarding is a priority in the staff recruitment and induction processes. Governors ask questions about the procedures that leaders have in place and check the effectiveness of leaders' work when they visit school. For example, governors and leaders have recently worked together to strengthen site security, carefully considering the constraints of the school site and the needs of all pupils.

Children feel safe in school and know that they can report concerns to a number of pupils and all adults. The well-trained pupil peer mentors explain the external training they have had to help them carry out their role successfully. All pupils I spoke to said that they would try to speak to a peer mentor first if they had a problem. Peer mentors are well trained in when to get an adult to support their work.

The support and care for all pupils, including those who are vulnerable, is strong. Parents and pupils mention how the learning mentor is available on the playground before school and in school throughout the day if anyone has any concerns. Pupils are confident in the support that she, and all other adults in school, give. Pupils are very positive about how they are taught to keep healthy. They know that this will help them mentally and physically as they grow up. School food ambassadors work with adults to check the school dinner menu and they take feedback from other pupils about the menu choices. Along with the sports leaders and school councillors, they lead assemblies and school improvement activities.

## **Inspection findings**

- Governors are rightly proud of the school's effective work in providing strong pastoral care, and of the pupils' positive attitudes to school life. They are very keen to support school leaders and dedicate time individually, and as a group, to visit school to see the work going on. However, their understanding of the progress pupils make through their time in school has been limited, because they have not been provided with information for all groups or classes of pupils in school. Therefore, they have not been able to direct their questions to, and challenge, school leaders effectively enough. This has also led to some inaccuracies in the school's self-evaluation. Governors listen carefully and are very receptive to advice about ways they can improve their own practice to ensure that pupils at Westgate are making the best progress that they can.
- During my visit, I wanted to see how well the school is supporting pupils who are working below the national expectations for their age. This group includes pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and some of the disadvantaged pupils, as well as those who are of lower ability in one or more subjects. Overall, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in making progress from their different starting points. The lead teacher has a good understanding of these pupils' needs and any barriers they may have to their learning. She makes sure that additional funding is directed effectively to ensure

that support is matched well to their individual needs. An effective partnership with parents and carers further enhances this work. So that you can better understand any gaps disadvantaged pupils have in their learning, you have started a thorough analysis of all of the disadvantaged pupils' work. This is helping you to more successfully direct the next steps these pupils need to take. You are very clear about which pupils are working below national expectations, but in writing lower-ability pupils are not given enough direction and support to make strong progress and catch up with their peers.

- In their work to develop pupils as well-rounded individuals, leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across a varied curriculum. Pupils take part in a large number of extra-curricular activities. Events for the whole family are regularly organised, such as the autumn term treasure hunt and barbeque. Leaders have planned carefully for what pupils will learn when the class teachers are undertaking planning, preparation and assessment tasks: specialist teachers deliver engaging lessons, for example in music, Spanish and physical education. During my visit, pupils were showing great interest in their music lesson. They were clearly used to the teacher's routines and high expectations: engagement levels were excellent while the teacher demonstrated how to play the accompaniment on the tuned instruments. Pupils then joined together, tunefully and with enjoyment, to sing and play a song.
- A strength of the curriculum is the school's work to promote pupils' lifelong skills in developing a healthy lifestyle and mindset. Leaders have looked for creative ways to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to be fit and active, and have tried hard to overcome the challenges of the school site. Pupils explain how the pupil sports ambassadors organise a number of events and activities, such as dance sessions, hula-hooping and skipping to music on the playground at lunchtimes. They are also developing a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy and balanced diet, and make sensible choices as a result.
- Leaders, including governors, are very pleased with the improvements that have been seen in mathematics. They explain that this is a result of their revised approach to delivering the challenges of the national curriculum. Improvements in early years and key stage 1 are most of note, where pupils are making stronger progress as a result of consistency of delivery in teaching in new methods. Leaders explain how they give extra support to pupils who have not been successful in a task. We discussed considering some of the successful strategies you have used to improve pupils' progress in mathematics when refining your improvement actions for writing.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they refine actions for improvement in writing, and check the effectiveness of these actions frequently, so that everyone is clear about how they can support pupils in making stronger progress
- school leaders give governors more precise information about how well all pupils, groups and cohorts of pupils are performing in writing and other subjects,

particularly across key stage 2, so that governors are able to focus their questioning more accurately to check the success of actions that leaders are taking

- teachers have high expectations in the quality of work that pupils of all abilities can produce
- lower-ability pupils are given clear direction in how to improve their work and be successful writers, so that they make more rapid gains in their learning and quickly catch up with their peers.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Rowley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, we spent time together in classrooms and looking at the quality of pupils' work. Along with your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, we discussed your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas you have highlighted for improvement. I looked at the success of the actions that leaders have taken. I held discussions with members of your governing body and had a separate meeting with your local authority school improvement partner. I met with middle leaders. I had a meeting with pupils and spoke to them about their school and their learning. I spoke to parents before school started and took into account the 65 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The responses from members of staff to the staff survey were also considered. I reviewed a number of school documents, including the written evaluation of the school's work, external reports, school assessment information, a range of policies and safeguarding information.