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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Sarah Wigfield
Headteacher
Staveley Junior School
College Avenue
Staveley
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S43 3XE

Dear Mrs Wigfield

Short inspection of Staveley Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained and improved the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is a junior school where the proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives additional funding is well above average. You, your staff and governors make no allowance for this in your expectations of what the pupils can achieve. You provide a nurturing environment where learning is exciting and challenging. Pupils have risen to this challenge and their progress has accelerated over the last few years. Details about some of the improvements made since the last inspection will follow later in this report.

The school is inclusive and welcomes the support and involvement of parents and carers. Your encouraging approach to involving parents, introduced shortly after your appointment, marked a change of emphasis for an already good school. Parents are frequently invited into school to get involved in workshops and to give their views. There are two school surveys each year and an active social media page on which parents regularly contribute. Pupils, also, are leaders of school improvement. For example, the 'Pupil Parliament' decided on the school motto: 'Dream. Believe. Achieve'. Its members were able to explain what this motto means for them.

You and your leaders are ambitious. You make sure that activities in and out of school stimulate learning and provide a rich experience for all pupils. Following a science homework recently, which generated a range of interesting photographs on social media, one parent summed it up with the comment, 'I've got to hand it to the

school – they make learning fun.’

This approach to learning was clear and effective during my visit, both in the secure learning seen in mathematics and literacy lessons and in the wider range of activities in topic books. Pupils’ ideas, such as ‘Flying or Fix-it Fridays’, when pupils attempt more challenging questions or consolidate the week’s learning, provide a structure for learning in mathematics. Pupils’ behaviour is extremely good and this plays an important part in how well they learn. Pupils are friendly and kind. They respond quickly to requests from adults. Attendance has improved a lot over the last couple of years as you and your staff take an understanding but firm approach.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have a detailed knowledge of the pupils in your school and the difficulties some of them face. As the school’s designated safeguarding officer, you have ensured that staff are trained and know what to do if they have a concern. Training for staff is regular and so their knowledge is kept up to date. Recruitment procedures are secure. Policy and practice take account of the most recent legislation. You ensure that safeguarding records are kept, and you take decisive and persistent action where necessary to ensure that each child is protected. You work effectively with other agencies to keep pupils safe and secure.

Pupils’ conduct and respect for each other play a significant part in their feeling of safety when in school. They have been taught to support and value each other and they say they will tell an adult if they are worried or use the worry box. Outside school, they can draw on their learning, for example about e-safety. Pupil ‘Digital Leaders’ help children in the nearby infant school to learn how to stay safe online. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- I considered the areas for improvement in the previous inspection report. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and were able to explain clearly how the school has developed. They know there has been an increase in pupils’ progress over the last few years, especially in mathematics. They believe that you have driven improvement by being supportive and caring but also capable of having a challenging conversation when needed. You are highly respected by governors, staff and parents. They know you have the children at heart. You have built a team around you that shares this important value.
- Teaching has improved. Leaders’ checks on teaching indicate that it is increasingly effective. This links with the increase in pupils’ progress. In reading and writing, where progress was average in 2017 compared to national figures, there was only a small difference compared to mathematics. For mathematics, progress was above average. This good progress is made by all groups of pupils – almost all pupils learn reading, writing and mathematics well, regardless of their starting point or background.
- Leaders keep careful track of the progress of pupils in every year group. They

have compared progress now to that made by Year 6 pupils last year. As a result, you are confident that mathematics results in 2018 will be just as good. We saw pupils learning mathematics during this inspection and we looked at work in books. Pupils are learning mathematics skills effectively and they are beginning to apply them well in other subjects and through problem-solving and reasoning activities. You intend to develop this mastery approach to mathematics teaching so that pupils' progress accelerates further. At present, there is still a very small number of pupils in Year 6 who have struggled in the past and who are not yet exposed to the most difficult topics, such as Pythagoras' theorem. In future, you intend that this will not usually happen.

- You have made a strong start on recording progress in other subjects, taught through topic work. This is recent and has not yet had time to be fully used to inform teachers' planning. It will be an important next step for the school.
- School improvement planning is now linked effectively to outcomes for pupils. Your most recent self-evaluation was perceptive and accurate. The plans that followed were clear, logical and have already been monitored to check that they are working. As a result, there is a lot of evidence that school leaders make the right decisions about how to help the pupils to succeed. For example, two years ago, there were too many disadvantaged pupils who were missing school. Through a mixture of understanding and tenacity, attendance is now better than the national average. Planning for individual pupils has also been honed. For example, the additional provision put in place to help pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities now links to targets which are much more specific.
- In 2017, the Year 6 pupils' spelling was not accurate enough. Leaders have responded to this relative weakness very quickly, seeing it as a barrier to excellence in writing. You and your teachers have already investigated new strategies, bought resources and introduced a consistent new approach throughout the school. Teachers are identifying incorrect spelling in pupils' writing. The pupils are responding and correcting their work in line with the school's policy. Already there is evidence that this is working. For example, pupils currently in Year 6 are writing much more accurately than pupils were doing this time last year.
- Although there were only a small number of parents who responded to the Ofsted survey, Parent View, they were overwhelmingly happy with the work of the school. You regularly seek parents' opinions. There are opportunities for parents to come into school and learn about the school's approach to a range of topics, such as numeracy and the use of tablet computers. There is a very active school social media account where regular dialogue and feedback takes place. Almost without exception, parents of pupils at your school are delighted with the education their children receive.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they consolidate and further improve pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by embedding new teaching approaches, such as mastery in mathematics, and by increasing pupils' accuracy in spelling
- they make effective use of the recent developments in subject-specific assessment and progress tracking so that teaching of a wider range of subjects matches the needs of all groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Ward
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I considered evidence from a range of sources, including the previous inspection report and information about the school's performance in 2016 and 2017. I also looked at the school's website. I spoke with parents at the gate when they arrived and I considered 25 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the Ofsted pupil and staff surveys, the results of a recent school survey and one telephone conversation with a parent. Meetings were held with you, school leaders and governors to discuss progress since the last inspection. I considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, the pupil premium strategy, provision plans, evidence of leaders' monitoring, the single central record of the checks on staff and volunteers, a sample of recruitment files, the safeguarding policy and records of actions taken to protect pupils' welfare. I looked at records of staff training. I talked with a group of staff to make sure they knew what to do if they were concerned about a child. We jointly made visits to lessons, looked at the quality of work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning. I met formally with 'Digital Leaders' and members of the 'Pupil Parliament' to listen to their views. I read reports written by a representative of the local authority.