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Mr Richard Hines
Headteacher
Weston Rhyn Primary School
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Dear Mr Hines

Short inspection of Weston Rhyn Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your assistant headteacher provide compassionate leadership with the safeguarding of pupils at the centre of your work. Together with the governors and the staff team, you demonstrate a clear commitment to improving outcomes for your pupils.

You and your assistant headteacher regularly review the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. As a result, you accurately identify the areas for improvement, which is evidenced through your self-evaluation and school development plan. You and your leaders identify ways in which to make the improvements, including utilising skills both from within the staff team and commissioning external support. For example, you have commissioned support from the early years team in Shropshire local authority and provided mathematics curriculum training for teaching assistants.

Teachers identify the interests of their pupils, which they incorporate into lessons. You actively encourage pupils to prepare for lessons at home. For example, pupils in one class wore pirate clothes while they wrote letters. In another class, pupils used their homework to support extended writing.

You create a warm, bright and engaging school environment for pupils. You and your staff have thoughtful and caring interactions with pupils, which are underpinned by the school motto, 'Believe and achieve'.

For example, the teachers provide a 'test survival pack', which contains small motivational items to remind pupils that they can succeed. These include 'a smartie because you're smart', and 'a candle because your future is going to be bright'. The breakfasts you cook for pupils on test days are very much appreciated.

Parents are very positive about the work you do with their children. One parent commented on how the school has supported her child to develop more positive behaviours. Parents are confident that you keep their children safe and that they can raise concerns with you.

The leadership team has addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. For example, a new child-centred plan for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been implemented, which focuses on the areas for support. You actively encourage parents and pupils to be involved in setting the targets in these plans.

Teachers continue to plan and provide pupils with greater literacy and numeracy opportunities across the curriculum. You and your teachers are also rightly concentrating on further developing and embedding these skills in highly focused literacy and numeracy lessons. However, you agree that in key stage 1 further development of opportunities for extended writing, spelling and handwriting needs to be undertaken to ensure that all pupils make at least average progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders are focused on providing the very best safeguarding procedures that will keep children safe. These procedures are thorough, and concerns are followed up. You rightly invest time and resources to ensure that staff, governors and parents know their role in keeping children safe. A safeguarding culture is central to your approach and, as part of ensuring this, you recently commissioned a safeguarding audit of the school from the local authority. This was positive and you have already taken action with regards to the few recommendations. The culture of safeguarding you create means that staff raise concerns with you and action is taken in a timely way.

Pupils feel safe in school and are well supported. Pupils are confident that they could approach a member of staff if they needed help. This is supported by one pupil's comment that, 'We know where to get help and we also have worry boxes if we want to use these.'

Parents spoken to during the inspection and the responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that they are confident that you keep pupils safe at school. An example they gave was your supervision of pupils arriving in the morning, which they feel is very good.

Inspection findings

- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that values additional opportunities for learning through a wide range of experiences. Recently, pupils have visited Ruthin Goal to support their understanding of fundamental British values. At a weekend, staff organise outdoor adventure trips for pupils from Years 5 and 6. The pupils value these opportunities, which support them to develop a wider understanding of the world beyond their immediate environment.
- The school website provides information for parents about the school curriculum. Homework is set regularly for pupils. Older pupils shared how they value this and enjoy the 'over and above' challenge, which is optional. The school continues to develop working relationships with parents, encouraging them to routinely practise skills at home with their children.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy rightly remains as foci for improvement. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are planning lessons carefully to build skills and concepts over time. This is evidenced in pupils' books. For example, a pupil in Year 3, who at the beginning of the year could write a short paragraph, can now write several paragraphs that are joined logically. Leaders are focused on further improving outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 literacy, as not enough pupils are making the progress they are capable of, by developing more opportunities for pupils to write independently and at greater length.
- Children in the early years provision receive good teaching. With the care and support of staff, children in the early years quickly develop self-help and social skills, settling well into class routines. Staff form positive relationships with parents, and the online system for sharing photographic records and evidence of their child's achievements is valued by parents.
- Leaders track and report progress to the governing body and parents twice a year. However, they have rightly identified that a more rigorous process for tracking and analysing progress is needed. Leaders are planning the implementation of a new system, which they will use to develop and monitor focused interventions. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to that of other pupils. However, leaders do not identify the barriers for these pupils or how they will effectively use pupil premium funding to promote pupils' progress.
- Attendance for most pupils is good. The headteacher is relentless in his efforts to improve attendance for all pupils. Pupils' behaviour is very good and there is a calm working atmosphere in classes. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong, and because of this pupils gain confidence in their own skills and are seen to be willing to take risks. A group of pupils explained, 'The teachers really challenge and support us', and, 'Teachers help by making work easier for us to understand rather than telling us to just get on.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new assessment system is implemented to track progress and plan timely interventions to improve outcomes for key stage 1 pupils
- teachers provide further writing opportunities and improve handwriting and spelling for pupils in key stage 1
- they effectively use pupil premium funding to promote pupils' progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Clugston
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the early years leader, the governing body and the local authority school improvement adviser. I met with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

I reviewed a range of other documents including your self-evaluation, pupil premium report, case studies, assessment and progress information, as well as documents relating to safeguarding, staff vetting and child protection procedures.

I visited classes with senior leaders to observe teaching and learning. I spoke to pupils during lessons and looked at their work both in and outside of lessons.