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Mr Matthew Jarvis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jarvis

### **Short inspection of Westfield School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 February 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the last inspection, the school has gone through a period of significant change in leadership and teaching staff. Despite many staff changes from then until now, you and your deputy headteacher have delivered strong leadership. This has enabled the school to move forward in spite of this period of turbulence. You have not shied away from tackling underperformance and the school is now in a more stable position. Your governors are knowledgeable, fully involved in the school's work and offer you strong strategic support. You have established close links with other schools in the locality to share best practice. As a result, leaders and teaching staff are highly reflective and constantly evaluate the impact of any decisions they make.

Parents have previously been very concerned about the large number of staff changes. It is clear, however, that you now have the confidence of the vast majority of parents, pupils, staff and governors, and of the local authority. The views of many parents are reflected in the comment: 'I think Westfield is a fantastic school. I am so pleased with how well they look after and teach my child there; the staff are warm and welcoming and the school itself really goes the extra mile to make sure learning is fun.' Pupils say they feel listened to and valued. Leaders have focused on developing the curriculum, which pupils were keen to tell me about. 'I couldn't wait to get to school to make my Egyptian death mask,' said one, illustrating the level of

enthusiasm pupils have for the school's revised curriculum. There has also been a successful drive to establish environments which help to support pupils' learning in English and mathematics in every classroom. As a result, pupils are more independent in their learning.

Leaders and governors are using the additional funding available to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively. A raft of measures, including intervention programmes and more emphasis on pupils' emotional well-being, help pupils in overcoming barriers to learning. Very specific targeted support for pupils and better training of assistants have also helped to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the gap in attendance and achievement between these pupils and others is narrowing. Leaders are aware that although the majority of targeted pupils are now making expected progress, pupils who have fallen behind need further additional support in order to catch up.

At the last inspection the school was asked to set harder work for most-able pupils and to make sure they were aware of how they could improve their work. The school is focusing on developing pupils' understanding of how well they are doing as a priority. As a consequence, pupils are increasingly articulate about their strengths and what they need to do to improve their work. The effectiveness of teaching in mathematics has improved as more emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' reasoning skills. You have introduced more challenge for all abilities in reading, writing and, particularly, in mathematics. A higher proportion of current pupils are on track to achieve at greater depth than at the same time last year. You are aware, however, that most-able pupils would achieve even more highly in mathematics if they had even greater challenge.

Leaders have introduced successful new approaches. As a result, the proportion of outstanding teaching in the school is increasing. Middle leaders are dedicated and innovative in their roles and play an effective part in the school's development.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The safety and well-being of children are strengths of the school. There are well-established systems to report and follow up any incidents or concerns about a child. Staff know pupils' families well and are vigilant for signs that all may not be well. There are well-documented examples of timely and effective work with a range of agencies to improve outcomes for vulnerable children. Staff relentlessly follow up absences to establish whether they are linked to safeguarding issues. As a result, attendance is now in line with national averages and the number of persistent absentees has fallen sharply. You are acutely aware that your work to improve persistent absenteeism needs to continue.

The few incidents of poor behaviour are followed up to make sure they are dealt with quickly and fairly. Children have full trust in teachers and leaders who, they say, sort out problems quickly.

All necessary checks on the suitability of staff, volunteers, contractors and governors are carried out and recorded appropriately. Governors regularly check the

effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe. For instance, they make regular visits to the school to see for themselves that the site is secure, policies and procedures are in place and recruitment processes are in line with their safer recruitment training.

## **Inspection findings**

- Leadership of developments in teaching is effective. A higher proportion of most-able pupils are on track to reach greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics than last year. Pupils can explain their thinking mathematically and are tenacious in tackling problems involving mathematics in 'real life' situations. They recognise what they have to do to improve their work in writing and mathematics. Progress in pupils' books is good. Outcomes in writing indicate that standards are rising securely. Occasionally, progress could accelerate even more in mathematics by providing even greater challenge for the most-able learners.
- Leaders have worked hard to build good relationships with individual families to reduce persistent absence. They 'go the extra mile' to earn the trust of parents and to support them through difficult times. As a result, overall attendance is now in line with national averages. The school recognises that there is more to do to reduce persistent absence still further, particularly that of pupils who are disadvantaged and/or who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders use additional funding resourcefully, which is making a positive difference both to disadvantaged pupils and to those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that these pupils receive bespoke support, and close links are maintained with parents to underpin this work. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting groups of pupils. Consequently, most targeted pupils are making strong progress and the achievement gap is narrowing. Leaders are not complacent, and realise that progress needs to accelerate to enable pupils who need to catch up with their peers to do so. Leaders do not evaluate the programmes of support provided closely and regularly enough. As a consequence, they do not always identify any further steps pupils need to take so they are not left behind.
- The school provides opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to gain rich, varied and exciting learning experiences. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the whole school visiting the Science Museum. They take part in a range of productions throughout the year and love to perform. Pupils also benefit from the wide range of subjects they study, such as specialist music and Spanish.
- Across the school, careful and appropriate links are made between subjects so as to incorporate the development of cross-curricular literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in Reception pupils were enthusiastically developing their writing through watery themed stories and their numeracy by programming their robots to reach treasure on a map of a sea island.
- The vast majority of parents, staff and pupils say that behaviour is good and that it is managed well. 'We have our ups and downs but we get through that and get along,' was the view expressed by pupils. They trust that an adult will always be available to listen. Pupils take great pride in their school and in receiving

behaviour awards and headteacher awards. New pupils are welcomed by classmates and settle quickly. Rates of fixed-term exclusions have reduced significantly to be in line with national averages.

- The local authority recognises the strong leadership in the school and how well the school develops its middle leaders. It acknowledges that the school has been on a challenging journey due to significant changes in staffing. Such is its confidence in the school's governors and leaders that it has provided 'light touch' support. The local authority has carried out checks on the accuracy of assessment procedures within the school each year since 2015 and found it to be secure in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Governance is strong. The governing body knows what the school does well and what it could be better. This is because governors visit regularly and check on how well the school is meeting the targets set in its development plan. Middle leaders report regularly to governors, providing 'health-checks' on the subjects they lead. Governors ask searching questions and are effective in holding leaders to account.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on their work to reduce levels of persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN and/or disabilities
- they carefully evaluate the impact of the additional support provided for pupils who need to catch up and promptly put in place further, additional, support if required
- teachers check how well pupils, particularly most-able pupils, are doing in mathematics, so they can move on to more challenging work as soon as they are capable of so doing.

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

Yours sincerely

Lynda Welham  
Ofsted Inspector

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you, your deputy headteacher and your mathematics leader. I also met separately with a recently qualified teacher, members of the governing body, and had a telephone call with a representative of the local authority. I observed the quality of learning, with you, in most classes. I observed behaviour at playtime and scrutinised attendance records. As well as talking to pupils in lessons, I met with a group of pupils from across the school to discuss their learning. I analysed pupils' progress, in their books in lessons, and with your deputy headteacher and mathematics leader.

I considered a range of evidence, including the school's latest assessment information, the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation, pupils' work, and child protection procedures and policies. At the end of the day I had conversations with parents and I took account of parents' comments through the 77 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also read the views of 12 members of staff and 54 pupils who completed the online survey.