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Mrs Laura Webber
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Webber

Short inspection of Reedings Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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 May 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 provide strong and passionate leadership both for your pupils and your staff. Your philosophy of 'aiming high together' is clearly embedded throughout your school; it is evident in the aspirations that your staff have for your pupils and in the high expectations that your pupils have of themselves. Since your appointment, you have developed a new and effective leadership structure and you are well supported by your two assistant headteachers. You focus on offering pupils the best possible opportunities, both in and outside the classroom. This is apparent in the priority that you give to the development of a high-quality curriculum which gives balance and breadth across all subjects, including the arts and humanities. As a consequence, you are continuing to improve the quality of education that you provide for your pupils.

Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning. They are proud of their school, they are excellent ambassadors and they are grateful for the many positions of responsibility that they are able to undertake. Pupils value the support and challenge that they get from their teachers and they welcome the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that they are offered. Pupils' positive views of the school are shared both by their parents and carers and by your staff. All of the staff

who completed the Ofsted survey stated that they are proud to work at the school, while an overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View would recommend the school to other parents.

You have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Your priorities for improvement are appropriate and leaders understand what is expected of them. As a consequence, the school has continued to improve since its previous inspection. More effective staff training, improved assessment practices and a greater focus on supporting pupils who fall behind have all contributed to an overall improvement in the quality of teaching. You provide weaker readers with additional support and you have increased the profile of reading through the creation of class libraries and a well-equipped non-fiction library. Weaker readers are now making improved progress throughout the school.

Governors provide you with highly effective support and challenge; they too know the school well and they are passionate about its continued improvement. Governors support the school's development through their contributions at full governing body meetings, their various committees and their visits to meet school leaders. Both you and governors were disappointed with aspects of your 2017 key stage 2 results and you are in agreement over the actions required to further improve the school. The planned actions include ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities continue to make improved progress and reducing the absence and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Governors have a clear understanding of their safeguarding duties and they are highly effective in carrying them out. Leaders undertake all appropriate checks on staff, and the relevant records are scrutinised on a regular basis by a nominated member of the governing body. Staff are well trained and they know how to identify any signs that pupils are at risk. Staff understand the school's systems for reporting concerns and they say that safeguarding is a part of the school's culture. Safeguarding records are well kept and any child protection referrals are monitored robustly.

Pupils say they are safe at school; staff and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View agree. Pupils say that, on the rare occasions it happens, bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively. They state that they attend a caring school and that there is always someone to help them if needed. Pupils are taught how to stay safe through assemblies, tutorial sessions and personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons that cover topics such as e-safety, bullying, and sex and relationships education. They value the high levels of staff supervision throughout the school day and the efforts of their peers who volunteer as play leaders at lunchtimes.

Inspection findings

- I pursued a number of lines of enquiry to ascertain whether the school continues to be good. My first question related to the impact that leaders, teachers and other adults are having on the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection, key leadership appointments, more effective staff training and rigorous monitoring by leaders have all contributed to improvements both in the quality of teaching and the support provided to this group of pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants value the training opportunities with which they are now provided, as well as the time they have available to plan together. The recent appointment of a new SEN Coordinator (SENCo), supported by an experienced governor with responsibility for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, has brought rigour to the tracking of pupils' progress. There is now much greater consistency in the coordination and monitoring of the support provided to this group of pupils if they fall behind. Teachers and teaching assistants now have a greater understanding of pupils' needs, while any additional support that pupils require is thoughtfully planned by the SENCo.
- As a consequence, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are now making much improved progress. Pupils are supported well by teaching assistants in lessons, they are confident to share their ideas with their peers and they have good attitudes to learning. Pupils' workbooks and leaders' assessment records both demonstrate that the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved over time. However, although the progress of this group of pupils has improved, leaders acknowledge that it still needs to be closer to that of other pupils with similar starting points nationally. Leaders also understand that they need to improve their analysis of pupils' assessments in order to develop further the support they offer to these pupils if they fall behind.
- A second line of enquiry related to the impact of leaders' actions to improve progress in writing at key stage 2, especially for boys. Effective leadership, improved staff training and robust monitoring now result in pupils making better progress in writing. Leaders understand why pupils' progress in writing declined in 2017 and they have worked closely with teachers to develop their understanding of the requirements of the national curriculum. Expectations are now higher, and teachers work together both to plan challenging activities and to assess pupils' work jointly. Leaders ensure that the profile of writing is high, especially for boys. For example, visits by male authors have taken place and new texts are selected that appeal both to boys and girls.
- As a result of leaders' actions, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 currently writing at greater depth is already higher than at this time last year and leaders expect this figure to rise further before the end of the year. My examination of leaders' current assessment information and the work seen in pupils' books confirms this. Similar improvements are evident in other year groups, and there is now little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. In lessons, pupils talk confidently about their writing; they can explain what they need to do in order to write effectively and they can show how their writing has improved over time. Leaders

demonstrate the impact of their improvement strategies through the quality of writing seen in pupils' books. In Year 3, for example, pupils' sentence structure has improved markedly this year.

- Finally, I wanted to check the extent to which leaders ensure that all pupils attend school and behave well. Leaders are rigorous in their monitoring of attendance and they work closely with pupils and their families, offering support when required. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are absent from school is in line with the national average, while the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school is well below average. However, leaders are aware that the absence and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils has risen this year. They demonstrate that the work they do to improve the attendance of this group of pupils is having a positive impact, but they acknowledge that the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still too low.
- Leaders have clear processes in place to support the management of behaviour and they are committed to ensuring that rewards and sanctions are used to good effect. In lessons and around the school, pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They work well together and are respectful of each other's opinions. The proportion of pupils who receive fixed-period exclusions is well below the national average. As a consequence, the overwhelming majority of pupils, parents and staff who responded to the Ofsted surveys stated that pupils behave well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they embed their recent changes in order to further reduce the differences in progress between pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils with similar starting points nationally
- they reduce the differences in the rates of absence and persistent absence between disadvantaged pupils and all 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 Hertfordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Gee

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, school leaders, other school staff, governors, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. Together, we made short visits to a wide range of classes to observe teaching, look at pupils' books and

see pupils at work. In addition, I reviewed a sample of key stage 2 English work books alongside school leaders. I scrutinised the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, its development plan and other documentation, including the record of pre-employment checks and child protection records. I also considered the 25 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View from parents, alongside the 15 responses from staff and the 49 responses from pupils to the Ofsted staff and pupil surveys.