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Mr Robert Beel
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Beel

Short inspection of Waltham Leas Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 9 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team, including governors, has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Together with all staff, you have ensured that the school continues to prioritise the right areas for pupils to succeed. The school's current development plan is clear, precise and well measured. It addresses those issues raised as a result of the school's performance in the national tests and assessments in 2017. This affirms that leaders know the school well and act promptly to make improvements that benefit pupils' personal and academic development. Working with partner schools in your alliance, you look to secure best practice throughout all aspects of the school's work. Hence, outcomes for pupils have continued to improve since the academy's last inspection in October 2014, and the school is well placed to improve further.

Following the findings in the last inspection, a large proportion of the teaching is now very strong, and pupils understand what they need to do to achieve well. You entrust improvements in their areas of responsibility to key leaders. You provide them with the support and training they need to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. With them, you take effective action to maintain high professional standards in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including tackling weaknesses quickly when these are identified. The quality of education and curriculum inspires the pupils. For example, they enjoy researching the lives of prominent scientists, who have helped to shape the world in which they live. They participate eagerly in sports clubs and musical events to broaden their knowledge and skills. As some pupils explained, when asked if they liked school, 'It's the best school ever! Teachers make the lessons fun and interesting. We go on trips to help us learn about the world and what we can do to make it better for everyone.' Pupils are particularly positive about the 'Maths Challenges' teachers set and

discussing with teachers how authors 'make you want to read'. Pupils read books and in their own time review them and post reviews in school for others to read. They enjoy learning together and sharing time in lessons to help, support and challenge each other. This helps them to gain confidence and independence in their work. Since the previous inspection, you have successfully improved the quality of teaching and leadership. However, you recognise that these are continually under review, because your aspirations are high for all pupils. Staff know their pupils well. Nevertheless, you acknowledge that despite your best efforts to provide appropriate support, some of the more disadvantaged pupils do not always achieve as well as they might. Similarly, a few of those pupils, who face complex challenges in their lives, or those who join the school late in key stage 2, underachieve sometimes.

You provide a safe, welcoming environment in the school. The school is a calm, happy place, and pupils know they are well cared for and valued by all staff. Most parents speak very highly how well staff support children and their families, particularly when any face difficulties at home or school. Parents recognise the high store you place on making sure that children enjoy school and achieve well. Parents say that their children make good progress, are very well prepared for secondary school and that all staff are very approachable and work hard to meet individual needs. Most comments received through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View free-text service and direct conversations with parents were positive. Parents' comments included: 'Our children are extremely happy here and I cannot fault it in any way' and 'I am so lucky my child is at such a good school.' Almost all pupils currently in the school are meeting their learning targets. Teaching staff support them effectively throughout. Occasional lapses in the quality of pupils' written work do occur, for example in pupils' handwriting and presentation. From time to time, pupils make avoidable errors by taking shortcuts when they set out multistep calculations. When reminded, most check their work carefully before submitting it for marking. Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour for learning, is strong because pupils know their education is important. You encourage parents to support their children's learning at home and plan events for parents to seek further guidance, for example with reading, mathematics and e-safety. Most appreciate these events.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders, including governors, check that all staff and governors understand their duty of care responsibilities and are appropriately trained to look after pupils. As a result, staff know to refer concerns and respond to pupils in relation to child protection matters promptly. Pre-employment vetting is robust to ensure that all staff are checked and cleared to work with pupils. Governors check that safeguarding procedures are appropriately completed and reviewed. Leaders also ensure that procedures for first aid training, risk assessments, supervision of pupils and site security are clearly understood by all staff and implemented correctly.

Pupils say they feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe, for example when working online, and explain confidently the different risks and hazards, that might occur and how to mitigate against these. They can also explain what to do in the event of a fire and how to stay safe on the roads. Pupils also know what bullying is and understand the need to be tolerant of others who may have difficulties managing

their behaviour or emotions. They feel that bullying does not really happen at school. However, they trust staff to help and intervene should it occur. You monitor pupils' behaviour and make referrals to gain emotional and mental support for them as needed.

Inspection findings

- While standards attainment was above average at all key stages in 2017, progress for pupils at the end of Year 6 was not as good as was expected, based on their starting points at the end of Year 2. Therefore, I wanted to check whether current pupils are on track to make good progress at all key stages this year. From broadly typical starting points, children in the early years make good progress. The vast majority achieve a good level of development and are well prepared for learning in Year 1. This is because staff plan for individual needs effectively and review children's progress closely to modify provision.
- By the end of Year 2 in 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing and mathematics was above the national average and a significant number exceeded the expected standards in both these subjects. These levels of attainment represent good progress. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils currently in key stage 1 are making good progress. The progress of a few pupils, specifically the disadvantaged and the very low attaining, is not consistently as strong, but overall improvements in teaching have resulted in a higher proportion of pupils working at greater depth in all their learning.
- In Year 6 in 2017, standards of attainment overall were above average, with outcomes in mathematics being the strongest, as a good number achieved at greater depth. However, not all of the disadvantaged pupils made as much progress as other pupils in the school. In addition, a few others, who had joined the school late in key stage 2, did not meet their targets. To a lesser extent, this is likely to happen again this year. Analysis of pupils' performance data and work in their books confirms that those who are at the school from key stage 1 onwards consistently make good progress. An above average number are on target to achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics this year.
- As a few of the more able pupils underachieved in 2017, I looked at the progress being made by similar pupils this year. There were extenuating circumstances as to why this group of pupils did not achieve their potential in 2017. Teachers use assessment information to plan for challenge, and in most circumstances teachers' expectations are high. Pupils are eager to learn and are competitive in improving their performance, for example in timed tests and completing projects. Occasionally, when not urged to press on, a few, among all ability groups, do not make the progress they could to achieve even more.
- During the inspection, I considered the achievement of different groups of pupils in previous years and currently. In particular, I looked at the performance of disadvantaged pupils. While overall they achieve better than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, in the last three years a few of these pupils have not made the same rates of progress as their classmates. On analysis, the school's assessment data shows that a disproportionate number of disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities or face very challenging issues in their lives that act as barriers to effective learning. The school's monitoring of teaching and learning is effective.

Leaders identify any pupils at risk of underachieving early and organise swift and effective support to help them accelerate their progress. The school is using pupil premium funds to good effect and, as a result, most disadvantaged pupils are now achieving well across the school.

- Prior to the inspection, when examining the school's website to check if the information therein met with current guidelines for academies, I found no mention of how the school promotes British values, for example issues of fairness, equality, justice and democracy. These matters are alluded to in various curriculum documents and school events, for example voting for school councillors and learning about the monarchy and investigating global issues such as pollution and recycling. However, the school accepts they needed to make the promotion of British values more explicit in their website information. The website was updated promptly during the inspection to meet requirements.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- provision for the disadvantaged pupils continues to be reviewed and revised to meet the needs of these pupils more effectively
- expectations of all pupils are raised further, particularly among those at risk of falling short of their targets
- pupils take greater pride in their written work and minimise errors, particularly when setting out multistep calculations
- leaders, including governors, monitor the quality of teaching and learning even more precisely to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajinder Harrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and all your staff, the chair of the governing body and three other governors. I also met with your phase leaders and key subject leaders, and other staff with specific responsibilities. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and examined the evidence therein. I reviewed documentation relating to pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, safeguarding checks and policies and procedures. I observed pupils around the school, including in the playground and the dining hall, and in classes. Together with your deputy headteacher, we visited all classes and discussed these observations together. I looked at pupils' books, spoke to pupils

about their work and listened to them read. I also met with pupils to get their views of the school and considered the 24 responses pupils submitted to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the day to seek their views about the school. I also took into account 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own survey of parents' views from last term, and the 21 free-text messages submitted by parents to Ofsted. I also considered the 31 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.