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10 July 2018

Mrs Sara Pecheur
Headteacher
Wheelers Lane Primary School
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Dear Mrs Pecheur

Short inspection of Wheelers Lane Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 2018 with Anna Smith, Ofsted Inspector, 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your senior leadership team offers considerable input in school development and supports you effectively, forming a very capable team. Leaders are eager to play their part in securing further improvements in the school's work. For example, they have been quick to put recent developments in the teaching of mathematics into practice in the classroom, securing notable improvements in the quality of pupils' learning.

In Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and during informal discussions, parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children are happy and safe at school.

Pupils' behaviour is good across the school. They are respectful to one another and their conduct around school is exemplary. Teachers across the school are committed to providing a range of external visits and opportunities to widen pupils' experience and their self-confidence.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's priorities. They are fully involved in the management of the school and provide strong support and challenge in equal measure. They challenge and support you effectively. They are regular visitors to the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work. Records of their work show that they hold leaders to account robustly for pupils' achievement.

School improvement plans have clear development points for further enhancing the

quality of teaching and raising levels of achievement. Leaders use a comprehensive system of assessment to track pupils' progress. This is proving effective, although further refinement is needed to compare accurately pupils' progress with that of other pupils nationally. Teachers attend half-termly meetings to discuss individual pupils' achievement, which helps ensure that pupils do not fall behind.

You and your leadership team have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For example, the checks made on learning are more focused. Teachers effectively use verbal feedback to inform pupils about their progress, strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, current pupils' progress is improving, and attainment is rising. There has also been a significant improvement in the progress pupils are making in mathematics in key stage 1. There is clear evidence in books of how you have revised the curriculum to include more opportunities to develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong and effective culture of safeguarding in the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed regularly. Detailed electronic records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality. All staff and governors receive timely training to develop their understanding and skills to identify concerns relating to child protection.

Case studies show that pupils who have been identified as being at risk are supported sensitively and promptly by staff. Pupils are informed about how to keep themselves safe and report that they seek guidance from staff if needed.

Strategies to tackle poor attendance and high persistent absenteeism have been effective. Attendance is in line with the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also improving and differences in attendance with other pupils have narrowed significantly.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed a number of key lines of enquiry, which we followed during the inspection.
- The first key line of enquiry concerned the progress that current disadvantaged pupils make in writing, which has not been as strong as their progress in reading and mathematics. Pupils' work and the school's assessment information show that pupils are benefiting from the recently introduced strategies to strengthen writing achievement. Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively, providing this group of pupils with a range of support activities. These include individual tuition or extra sessions with small groups of pupils in English and mathematics. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who make good progress in writing is typically below the national average.
- Another line of enquiry focused on how leaders have worked effectively with other schools to develop a more precise assessment of pupils' progress in writing.

This moderation of work has been successful in providing a more accurate overview of pupils' attainment and progress. Current assessment information, as confirmed by the books seen during inspection, shows that the proportion of pupils on track to meet or exceed the expected standard is higher than in previous years for both Year 2 and Year 6. Work in pupils' books shows that some do not write neatly and fluently. In some classes, their handwriting is not formed correctly.

- Pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation skills are a strength. These skills are translated into above national average results in external assessments. However, the books seen during the inspection show that translating these skills into pupils' written work, especially spelling, is an area that requires more work.
- Our final line of enquiry looked at attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils and the school's higher than national average rate of exclusion.
- Leaders identify and support pupils who require additional support to improve their attendance. Most pupils love school and attend well. You identified the need to offer additional support for disadvantaged pupils. You and your staff have developed very supportive relationships with parents, challenging them when necessary, to ensure good attendance and to keep pupils safe.
- The number of exclusions and repeat exclusions has been above average in recent years. You do not take decisions to exclude pupils lightly. You provided evidence of a close working relationship with the local authority that showed that fixed-term exclusions have been justified and necessary. Several pupils who have complex behaviour needs have improved their behaviour over time. You and the governors are going to continue to monitor the rates of fixed-term exclusions. You have a behaviour policy that is clear and fair and you implement it very effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils' skills, particularly in writing, are developed further to match those achieved in reading and mathematics
- the quality of pupils' writing improves, including the accuracy of spelling, and is sustained throughout the school so that more pupils achieve higher standards
- all adults have consistently high expectations of pupils' presentation in books and develop a greater consistency in the quality of pupils' work.

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

Yours sincerely

Max Vlahakis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We observed pupils' learning in lessons or parts of lessons across the school. We looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. We met with a group of pupils. We observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and breaktimes, as well as in lessons. We looked at a range of documentation, including the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed, and the school improvement plans. Meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leaders, the mathematics and English leaders, two newly qualified teachers and the office staff. We met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. We took into consideration the 100 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. We met parents at the start of the school day. We also considered the 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.