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Mr Antony Dutton
Headteacher
Wellfield Junior School
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Dear Mr Dutton

Short inspection of Wellfield Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Wellfield is a calm, safe and purposeful school where pupils are well behaved and want to learn. You, staff and governors are willing to learn too. You are open to advice and support, including from the local authority and your school consultant, and are keen to benefit from outstanding practice in other schools. During your headship, you have galvanised the support of staff and governors. They are all highly positive, supportive, and optimistic about the clear direction in which senior leaders are taking the school.

The reviews you have commissioned, including of mathematics and pupil premium funding, have provided you with a positive steer for the school, as has carefully targeted training and professional development for staff. You know there is more work to be done to raise standards even further, including for your most able and disadvantaged pupils, and have made it a priority to continue to improve the quality of teaching.

Relationships with parents and carers are excellent. Those I met during the inspection had nothing but praise for Wellfield. Their positive sentiments were echoed in the many text messages which I received. Typically, parents told me that the school provides a warm and friendly atmosphere, where children are safe and well behaved. In addition, they stated that their children make good progress, both academically and socially, and described the array of extra-curricular activities you offer as 'praiseworthy'.

You have specially resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, called the Aspen class. When I visited this class, I was moved by the care, compassion and high expectations of staff. All pupils make good progress, as shown in their workbooks. They enjoy participating in activities alongside their peers in the mainstream part of the school and benefit from the same rich and exciting curriculum. This was evident as pupils celebrated the birthday of Roald Dahl and wrote their own imaginative descriptions of Mr Twit's disgusting beard.

The pupils I spoke with informed me that there is no bullying in school. They said that behaviour is almost always good and that any 'fall-outs' are soon reconciled. Pupils know your new behaviour policy well. They have an excellent understanding of sanctions and rewards. Pupils are appreciative of their new outdoor area, especially the 'trim trail', and like to compete in the 'daily mile' exercise. Pupils are developing mature attitudes. They told me that learning is getting harder and more interesting. They enjoy 'chilli challenges' and 'going for gold'. All are aiming to be 'expert' learners.

Most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been resolved. Teachers now have more opportunities to observe best practice within the school. Small-group sessions led by adults are now more focused on developing specific reading skills. As a result, the quality of teaching has been enhanced and the most recent provisional data shows that attainment at the end of Year 6 is improving and compares favourably with the national average. However, standards in mathematics could be even higher, particularly for the most able pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together, all staff ensure that nothing is left to chance when it comes to safeguarding. Appropriate recruitment checks are made to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with pupils. All staff have signed to say they have read the school's new safeguarding policy, as well as the most recent government guidance of September 2018, on keeping children safe in education.

Staff have regular training to update their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. All staff have had 'Prevent' duty training. This is in keeping with the government's agenda to counter terrorist and radicalisation. All governors are appropriately trained. As an accredited Home Office safeguarding trainer, you deliver much of this training yourself. The chair of the governing body completes regular checks on the school's safeguarding procedures to ensure that everything is in order. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They told me that they can approach any member of staff if they have a concern. Pupils understand the importance of e-safety. They are adept at staying safe when surfing the internet. All documentation relating to safeguarding examined during the inspection was fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked closely together at pupils' performance in mathematics. This was agreed as an important line of enquiry because by the end of Year 6 in 2017 pupils' progress in this subject had been below average for two years. In contrast, your own, more recent, data indicates that most pupils made strong progress in all classes in 2018. The workbooks I scrutinised showed me that teachers are very clear about their expectations in mathematics. Pupils are carrying out more practical activities and using their calculation and problem-solving skills well in subjects such as science.
- Your mathematics leader, also a Year 6 teacher, has undertaken a broad range of training to ensure that he is well prepared for his role. Together with you, he ensures that plans to improve mathematics are precise and fully implemented. All staff have had training to enhance their appreciation of the importance of pupils' fluency in and mastery of mathematics. Teachers' work to develop the most able pupils' confidence to challenge themselves with more difficult activities is beginning to bear fruit. This is shown in your most recent unvalidated national key stage 2 data, which indicates that standards have improved in mathematics at the end of Year 6. The challenge for the school is to ensure that these improvements are sustained.
- My next line of enquiry related to the performance of disadvantaged pupils. This was because national data indicated that the differences between their performance and that of others nationally were not diminishing quickly enough. You agreed that this was a useful focus, since senior leaders and governors have placed a high priority on improving outcomes for this group of pupils. Your decision to review pupil premium spending, and to develop and roll out an action plan, has been highly positive for the school and is helping to raise standards.
- Your own school data indicates that disadvantaged pupils' performance, including in reading, writing and mathematics, was much improved in 2018. Differences are quickly diminishing in school. For example, all disadvantaged pupils made rapid progress in mathematics in Year 3 and reading in Year 5. They also made strong progress in writing in Year 4. Unvalidated 2018 data for disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 indicates that differences between their performance and that of others nationally are minimal. There is no longer a difference in grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, although improving, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils could be even higher.
- My fourth line of enquiry focused specifically on your most-able pupils. Historically, you have admitted a high proportion of high-prior-attaining pupils in Year 3. They formed your largest group at the end of Year 6 in 2017. At this time, pupils' attainment was broadly average in mathematics and writing and below average at the higher standard in reading. Their attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling was strong. However, too few made the progress of which they were capable.
- The school's own data shows that your most-able pupils made strong progress in most classes in 2018. They continue to do so this year because most teachers have high expectations of them. This was evident in a Year 6 English class,

where pupils were encouraged to use 'powerful punctuation' and incorporate words such as 'malevolent' and 'disastrous' in to their creative writing. In a Year 3 history lesson, pupils put their investigative skills to good use as budding archaeologists. They took up 'super stretching' activities to identify various Stone Age artefacts and describe how they might have been used. However, there is more work to be done to raise standards further for the most able pupils.

- The school has a solid core of avid readers in each class. Pupils who read for me did so with clarity and enthusiasm. Older pupils confidently read challenging books with good diction. All pupils are highly appreciative of the introduction of new books to the library, as well as the many opportunities available for them to refine their reading skills.
- Finally, we looked at attendance and exclusions. Although the latest national data indicated that pupils' attendance was average overall, this was not the case for all groups. In addition, fixed-term and repeat exclusions were higher than average. Your most recent data shows that most pupils attend regularly, and attendance is broadly average. You are doing all you can and are working effectively with a range of professionals and parents to improve the attendance of a very small core of persistently absent pupils. You keep detailed records on pupils' behaviour. Records indicate that behaviour is typically good, and exclusions are very rare.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and ensure that all staff fully implement the school's pupil premium action plan
- teaching provides more consistent challenge, particularly in mathematics, for the most able pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Lenford White
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders and members of the governing body. With both you and the deputy headteacher, I visited classes across the school. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local

authority, listened to pupils read and had a discussion with a random sample of pupils. I examined various documents, including English, mathematics and pupil premium action plans and data on pupils' performance and scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks. I also looked at a wide range of policies, including those for behaviour, safeguarding and the curriculum.

I took account of parents' views at the start of the school day. I also considered 40 free-text messages and responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 43 responses to the pupil survey and 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.