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1 November 2018

Mrs Yolande Sayer  
Headteacher  
West Leigh Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Sayer

### **Short inspection of West Leigh Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 October 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 has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and governors know the school well. You have high expectations of what can be achieved. You reflect on what works well and what could be better and put carefully considered strategies in place to achieve your objectives. As a result, you continue to build successfully on the strengths of the school and to address areas for development as they arise.

You and other leaders are outward looking as you improve the school. You visit different schools to see what they do well. Staff across the school are involved in a local group where they share good practice. You seek others' views on the effectiveness of provision to find out what might be better. You make effective use of educational research in the way you design the school's curriculum. Consequently, your improvement strategies have the impact that you intend them to have. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 is consistently high.

Pupils I spoke with told me they enjoy school and the work that they do. Parents and staff are positive too. The proportion of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, was high. Almost all of those who responded said they would recommend the school. All staff who responded to Ofsted's survey of their views said that they are proud to work there and that the school is led and managed well.

One of your successes since the previous inspection has been to secure the commitment of staff to your vision. For example, teachers are consistent in their

application of the phonics scheme you and other leaders have chosen. They follow your strategies for teaching writing closely. Because the strategies are chosen carefully and applied well, they are effective. Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are high and pupils make good progress in writing.

You are ambitious to instil an enthusiasm for fitness from an early age. Pupils swim weekly, as well as participating in physical education lessons every week. In addition, pupils benefit from fitness sessions four days each week. Every day, pupils complete a 'daily mile'. You are rightly proud of your successful work to develop pupils' physical well-being.

Governors speak warmly of the welcoming environment they experience. They are pleased that you seek parents' views through the parent council and told me that they always feel welcome in the school. They take care to listen to what you tell them, but also to challenge it. For example, governors actively participate in a local network to compare the practice at West Leigh Infant School with that of other schools. They check the impact of your work through, for example, visits to check on safeguarding procedures. Governors value your work, are proud of the school and play an active role in supporting its continued development.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You maintain clear and easy to follow records of concerns about pupils' well-being. You follow these up with staff and with external agencies as appropriate, taking timely actions to ensure that pupils are kept safe. You ensure that staff have regular training and that they receive updates on changes to safeguarding practices. You and your deputy designated senior leaders for safeguarding take effective steps to keep your own understanding up to date.

Pupils are taught to keep safe through personal, social and health education, assemblies, theatre workshops and discussions in class. Pupils I spoke with told me how they are taught to keep safe online, and you explained the software you use to safeguard them on computers in school. Pupils I spoke with said there are not many incidents of unkindness but that, if they were to happen, adults would deal with them well.

### **Inspection findings**

- One of my lines of enquiry during the inspection was to find out if you and other leaders understand and meet the needs of small groups of pupils effectively. This was because there was some variability in the published outcomes data for the disadvantaged pupils who attend the school. The same was true for the pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Your strategies for supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are understood well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with pupils and teachers to identify how to meet those pupils' needs. Some pupils benefit from their time in the 'Little Rays' programme, focusing on their social and emotional needs alongside their academic targets. In lessons, pupils are

supported well by adults. You take a similarly individualised approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils. You identify the things which might prevent them from learning and put targeted support in place to help them.

- You and other leaders understand the needs of small groups of pupils well. You provide effective support and enable them to make good progress.
- My next line of enquiry was to establish whether leaders have taken effective action to improve the achievement of boys in writing. Over time, girls have consistently attained more highly than boys in writing. The previous inspection report identified this as an area for the school to improve.
- Your approach to teaching writing is founded on your research of good practice. It is understood and applied by teachers across the school. Work in boys' books shows them securely developing the key skills of writing and making good progress over time.
- While boys' writing skills are improving, there remains a notable gap between the quality of their writing and that of girls. By the end of key stage 1, the achievement of boys remains below that of girls.
- My final line of enquiry related to the early years. The previous inspection report recommended that you made the outdoor area more rich and varied and that you improved the resources available to support children's physical development.
- The outdoor area is markedly better. It is vibrant and full of meaningful activity. Children work and play well, enjoying a diverse range of resources and activities which help them to develop across all areas of early learning. Their physical development is promoted well. Adults work effectively with children on new equipment, such as the climbing frame and climbing wall, purchased for this purpose. The outdoor area now reflects the strong provision elsewhere in the early years and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is consistently above the national average.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve boys' progress in writing so that their attainment is in line with that of girls.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Southend-on-Sea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I spoke with you, other leaders and three governors. With leaders, I visited five classes in key stage 1 and all classes in Reception, as well as reviewing pupils' work in their books. I looked at information about pupils' progress and reviewed a range of documentation relating to the work of governors, the school's self-evaluation and development planning and safeguarding arrangements.

I considered the 150 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 108 responses from parents to the free-text option and the 28 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I met with a group of six pupils to hear their views.