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Dear Mrs Watson

Short inspection of Lent Rise 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, together with highly skilled governors, have overseen an expansion in pupil numbers, managed a substantial building project and converted to become an academy since that inspection. Additionally, you have strengthened leadership by appointing a new deputy headteacher and introduced phase leaders who have responsibility for outcomes in their respective phases. The large majority of parents are pleased with the quality of education you provide. One parent wrote, 'I couldn't wish for a better school for my children to attend. It is a nurturing, safe, wonderful and inclusive environment for them to spend every day in.'

You and your leadership team are dedicated to ensuring that all pupils are fully prepared for the next stage of their education. You involve all staff in shaping the future direction of the school. You have created a culture in which teachers are not afraid to take risks to improve their practice. One of the strengths of the school is the open culture in which staff regularly visit each other's classrooms to share best practice. This ensures a consistent approach to teaching that is typically lively and engaging and helps to promote good learning. Staff are highly complimentary regarding your style of leadership. They appreciate being involved in making decisions and agreeing policies and practices to achieve a good quality of education for all pupils.

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is above average. They are happy young people who take pride in their school and in their

achievements. Pupils say that staff listen to them and take any concerns seriously. As a consequence, they feel safe in school because they receive high-quality care. Pupils from all backgrounds get on very well together. They appreciate the wide range of cultures represented by the school population. They say that this helps them to learn about the different faiths and beliefs of each other, and that this creates a climate of trust and respect within school and the wider community. Pupils say that they are all treated equally and fairly and that there is no discrimination.

Governors are passionate about the school and take on their roles conscientiously and with commitment. They visit school regularly both formally as well as informally and so see for themselves how well leaders put agreed policies into practice. They have reorganised the way in which they work to allow them to provide a high level of support, as well as professional challenge to school leaders. Governors play a key role in shaping the vision and direction alongside school leaders and staff. This ensures that staff and governors are working towards the same common purpose.

You and your leaders have a keen sense of the strengths of the school and where further improvements are needed. Since the previous inspection you have introduced a comprehensive approach to record and track pupils' progress. You have improved the quality of teaching by developing the quality of feedback teachers provide to pupils. However, you know that there is more to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils, particularly those who are most able, make equally strong progress compared to other pupils. You are also taking action to raise standards in writing across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils have been further strengthened in recent years. School leaders have introduced an electronic system to record concerns regarding pupils' safety and welfare. This allows staff to build a picture that might point to a pupil being in need of help. All staff have been trained to use the system and are confident that they know exactly what steps to take should they have a concern about a pupil. All records relating to safeguarding are very well maintained and fit for purpose. Robust procedures are in place to recruit new staff, and all volunteers and visitors are carefully checked before being admitted into school.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe from potential dangers surrounding e-safety. They know that they must not provide personal information when using modern technology. Pupils know about different forms of bullying but say that it rarely happens. They are confident that adults take immediate steps to sort out the occasional disagreement that might arise. In the playground, pupils behave well and show kindness and consideration towards each other and adults.

Inspection findings

- In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils, we also agreed to look at: the extent to which the school provides a rich and broad curriculum while maintaining good outcomes for pupils;

the learning and progress of vulnerable groups of pupils; and how well the assessment system is used by school leaders and teachers to ensure rapid progress for all pupils.

- Over the past three years, under the careful guidance of school leaders, staff have developed a strong curriculum that both excites and engages pupils. Subjects are taught under an overall theme or topic and this helps pupils to develop a wide understanding of subjects across the curriculum. This provides pupils with plenty of opportunities to use their literacy, mathematical and communication skills when learning other subjects. The most recent performance information shows that the school is maintaining high standards within a rich and broad curriculum.
- Teachers regularly provide feedback to pupils and this helps pupils to progress well across all aspects of their learning. Each new topic includes a class text that is relevant to the topic being studied. This helps to develop and extend pupils' reading skills across the broader curriculum and promotes their enjoyment of reading. Although the quality of writing is quickly improving, it is not yet consistently strong across the school. Work in some pupils' books shows that there are remaining gaps in their application of basic skills, including spelling, punctuation and grammar. This prevents a higher proportion of them from reaching higher levels in their national assessments.
- School leaders identified that disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able, do not always learn as quickly as other pupils. To address this, they deployed a member of staff to act as pupil premium leader whose role it was to oversee the learning and progress of these pupils. She has devised a pupil premium strategy that shows the actions to be taken to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as other pupils. All teaching staff specifically target disadvantaged pupils in their planning to ensure that their learning needs are catered for in classrooms. Teachers also provide extra teaching to small groups to help them to overcome their specific problems.
- Disadvantaged pupils are also provided with help towards the costs of school trips, attendance at breakfast club and school uniform. This helps them to participate in all school activities with confidence and enjoyment. As a result of all of these actions, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is diminishing. However, school leaders know that there is more to be done to improve outcomes for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- In some year groups there are few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and so comparisons with other pupils are statistically unreliable. However, the most recent performance information shows that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress as other pupils. This is because teachers are trained to pick up on their particular misconceptions at the earliest stages of teaching. They then adjust the work by breaking it down into smaller steps so that these pupils understand what they are expected to do.
- School leaders and teachers have a thorough understanding of the school's new system to record and track pupils' progress. Teachers have been trained to use this system and so they can keep a careful watch on pupils at risk of falling behind their classmates. School leaders and governors use of performance

information effectively to identify the rates at which pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics. It allows them to identify patterns and trends for all pupils as well as groups of pupils over time and to take rapid action to address emerging weaknesses. Governors are provided with termly reports of pupils' learning and progress so they can hold leaders to account for pupils' progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils consistently spell and punctuate their written work accurately and that they check that their writing is grammatically correct
- the most able disadvantaged pupils make faster progress to reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. You and I observed pupils working in most classes across all year groups. I looked at work in pupils' books and I spoke to pupils about their work in class as well as within a formal meeting. I analysed a range of documents, including school improvement plans, pupils' assessment information and the school's evaluation of its own performance. I also looked at documentations showing how the school keeps pupils' safe. I took into account the views of parents by analysing the 70 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and by considering the 68 written responses. I took into account the views of staff by reviewing the 21 responses to the staff survey.