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Miss Jenny Hodgkinson
Lovers Lane Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Miss Hodgkinson

Short inspection of Lovers Lane Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 November 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since joining the school in 2016, you have built a cohesive staff team that is committed to doing their best for the pupils. Every member of the school is valued for their individual contribution to 'Team Swan'. The acronym SWAN (Show respect, Work together, Aspire, Nurture) sets out the school values, which are seen clearly in the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils know the school values and appreciate their teachers. One pupil said, 'They make you excited to learn.' Parents praise the staff and the support that they give to their children. One parent commented, 'The school is inclusive and I am so glad my child attends such a nurturing environment.'

There has been much change in the school since the last inspection. Standards started to decline because pupils did not make enough progress in their learning. A number of staff left and others have joined the school, which has led to some inconsistencies in teaching. You now have a leadership team with the capacity to implement your improvement plan, and a wider staff team who have been involved in developing the school's priorities and have the skills to bring the plan to fruition.

In order to improve pupils' engagement and motivation to learn, you have developed a curriculum that is taught through different themes such as 'Aztecs' and 'Comparing Africa to Newark'. Challenge questions such as 'Would you find a lion in Newark?' make learning interesting and engaging. By linking stories to the themes, pupils are encouraged to read more widely and develop an enjoyment of reading.

You have rightly identified that you need to improve standards overall, but particularly in mathematics as recent outcomes have been weaker than in other subjects. Following an analysis of pupils' work and test results, you have made changes to the way that some aspects of mathematics are taught so that pupils can develop their skills of problem-solving and reasoning. This helps them to tackle more complex work and to have a better understanding of mathematical concepts.

The previous inspection report recommended that tasks and activities should be developed that would lead to faster progress and higher standards in the early years, particularly for boys, in communication, language and literacy. Recent changes in the early years environment have improved the learning opportunities, and children are making better progress. However, you have noted that there is still a need to focus on early language and mathematical skills for all children, and this remains a priority for the school in improving standards.

The school was also asked to increase the challenge for its most-able pupils. Lessons now include extension tasks to encourage deeper thinking and extend pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, as well as calculating fractions of numbers, pupils were challenged to explain and prove the calculation methods that they were using. However, this approach is a relatively recent development and is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The designated safeguarding leads are suitably trained and ensure that they keep up to date with the most recent government guidance. They work closely with the named governor for safeguarding and ensure that regular monitoring of the school's safeguarding procedures takes place. Staff and governors receive training that includes induction for new staff as well as regular update training.

Local risks to pupils' welfare have been identified and assessed, and actions have been taken to minimise risk. Vulnerable pupils and families who may need support are monitored carefully and any concerns are documented and followed up thoroughly. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils have access to the support they need.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They say that behaviour is generally good and that bullying is rare. The number of incidents involving poor or inappropriate behaviour has reduced. Pupils have confidence in adults to sort out any problems that they may have. They told me about the 'worry monsters' around the school. Pupils can write down any worries and put them in a box. Teachers check the boxes frequently and follow up any concerns.

Attendance is improving and is currently close to the national average. Weekly celebrations of good attendance remind pupils of the importance of coming to school. Teachers meet pupils and parents on the playground at the start of the day

to encourage punctuality.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I looked closely at the impact of leaders' actions to bring about improvements in the school's performance. You have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and identified areas that need further improvement. Training and professional development opportunities are focused on ensuring that there is a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Leaders with particular responsibilities, for example leading a subject, are knowledgeable and provide support to colleagues where needed.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 have been below national average for some time because pupils have not been making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Careful data analysis has identified where further work is needed to improve standards. This has led to changes in the way that some subjects are taught, for example in mathematics.
- You have analysed the progress of different groups of pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, which increases as their understanding of English improves. Disadvantaged pupils form a large group of the school's population, and their outcomes vary between year groups and whether any individuals have additional needs. However, many of these pupils are making good progress and achieve as well as their peers. Current assessment information shows that pupils have made measurable progress since the beginning of the year and increasing proportions of pupils are on track to achieve standards expected for their age by the end of the year. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 is likely to remain below national average for 2019.
- Teaching is generally effective throughout the school and some is particularly strong. However, evidence shows that teaching has not been consistently good over time, which is partly due to staff turnover. You now have a stable team who are working together closely to ensure a greater consistency in the teaching strategies they use. Leaders have set high expectations, which are reinforced in pupil progress meetings, and standards are beginning to pick up.
- Pupils can explain how teachers help them to improve their knowledge and understanding. They told me about their individual targets and how they can use checklists to review their own work and improve it. Pupils' books are generally well presented and there are consistent expectations throughout the school. Progress is evident from the beginning of the year. I compared pupils' current work to books from the previous academic year. Standards are better now and there are more opportunities for pupils to develop a wider range of mathematical and literacy skills. However, these improvements are not fully embedded and have not yet translated into improved end of year outcomes for pupils.
- In the early years classes, children are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. Adults are supportive and engage pupils in conversation to improve their language skills. Classrooms are set out attractively and there is a wide range of

activities available to them. The outdoor learning area is not as well resourced as the classrooms, and some children find it harder to concentrate on their learning when outside.

- Children often join the school with skills and knowledge below what is expected for their age. Historically, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year has been well below national average. In 2018 only 40% of children achieved expectations for their age. Current assessments show that children are making faster progress because of improvements in teaching and resources, and more than half are on track to achieve a good level of development. However, this is still below the national average and remains a priority for the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching is consistently good in all classes and all subjects in order to improve outcomes for pupils
- rates of progress improve so that the standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are close to the national average
- a greater proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2
- progress in the early years improves so that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is close to the national average
- the outdoor area in the early years is improved so that it is of a similar quality to the classrooms and that there is a full range of learning opportunities, ensuring that progress is equally good when children are learning outside.

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

Yours sincerely

Jane Salt
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I carried out a learning walk with you and visited all classes. I reviewed pupils' books to consider the standard of work and the progress being made. I talked with a group of pupils and listened to some pupils read.

I held meetings with you and other school leaders to discuss the school's work and

priorities for improvement. I also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including assessment information, your school self-evaluation and improvement plan. I also reviewed documentation relating to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils.

I took into account nine responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to some parents informally at the beginning of the school day. One pupil and eight staff responded to Ofsted's online questionnaires.