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Mrs Helen Matt
Headteacher
Victor Seymour Infants' School
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Dear Mrs Matt

Short inspection of Victor Seymour Infants' School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

In July 2016, the school became an academy, and joined the Greenshaw Learning Trust. The Trust has worked closely with the senior leaders at the school to continue to develop leadership capacity at all levels. This has ensured senior and middle leaders have driven improvements in their respective areas. Leaders have maintained and developed the strengths of the school and made significant improvements where there were weaknesses. Consequently, since the previous inspection, pupils' progress has improved substantially. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development in the early years has been above national average for the past three years. Similarly, the attainment of pupils in key stage 1 has been above national average across all areas, with strong progress from pupils' starting points.

Leaders, including governors, are accurate in evaluating the work of the school. They are relentless in pursuing the best possible outcomes for pupils. Leaders have high expectations and are not complacent about what needs improving. There is a united effort among leaders and staff to provide excellent learning opportunities. The staff are clear about the actions for improvement that are being taken, and about the impact of these actions on pupil outcomes. You believe strongly in empowering staff

and pupils to do their best. The culture at Victor Seymour is highly aspirational, and it successfully motivates staff and pupils to strive for success.

Pupils enjoy learning, and excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils. Teachers challenge pupils effectively. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, and they are able to use quality resources to learn independently. They work well together with minimal support from adults. Pupils are confident and are articulate. They take pride in their work, and are polite and courteous. Pupils interact positively and confidently with adults and visitors.

The board of trustees and the governing body complement each other in providing school leaders with sharp and timely support. They undertake regular visits to school to confirm the reliability of reports, and of the information that they receive from school leaders. They work closely alongside you, and have good systems in place to compare the school's performance against that of other schools nationally and locally.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that relevant checks on the suitability of staff remain robust. Staff receive timely training and frequent reminders to make sure that they are kept fully up to date about how to keep pupils safe. They are vigilant on noting and passing on any concerns or observations to relevant personnel. Records relating to safeguarding are detailed, organised, up to date and fit for purpose.

Parents and carers confirmed that the school is a safe place and that their children are looked after well. One parent typically commented that: 'Teaching staff are visible and accessible to parents and carers at the start and end of each day, and are very responsive to any questions or queries.'

You are not complacent about pupils' safety. You take every opportunity to make sure that arrangements to keep pupils safe are secure. You have identified opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe at home, at school and online. Pupils are able to talk confidently about effective ways to do this. The trust is working with you to make sure that the systems you have in place are maintained at the highest level possible.

Pupils are adamant that this is a safe school. They told me that there is always an adult to talk to about any concerns. Pupils move around the building and the school grounds very sensibly.

Inspection findings

- During our initial discussions, we agreed to look at the early years as our first key line of enquiry. This was because, over the last three years, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development has been consistently above national average.
- Teachers in the early years are skilled at taking account of what children already

know when planning their learning. As a result, not only do children make strong progress, but they show genuine interest in their activities. Adults encourage them to be resilient in their learning. As a result, children show high levels of focus and concentration. They stay with an activity from start to finish, and they enjoy the learning process. Adults make a point of celebrating the children's achievements regularly.

- Adults are highly effective at supporting children to maximise their learning. They are swift to identify and intervene when children are unsure of their next steps in learning, and they are equally effective at enabling them to move forward. Teachers' very effective questioning techniques enable children to acquire a deep understanding of the topic they are learning.
- Children are well supported in the development of their early reading and writing skills. Opportunities to develop these skills abound across early years. Teachers spend considerable thought and time preparing inviting writing and reading areas. These areas flow seamlessly from indoors to outdoors and vice-versa. As a result, children engage in writing activities, producing stories, letters and lists.
- This focus on basic skills extends to children's development of their mathematical skills. Children who have only been in the Nursery for a term are able to recognise and write numerals up to 10, and some of them can go beyond 10.
- For our second key line of enquiry, we looked at how pupils are supported to acquire knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum. This was because over the past three years the proportion of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected and higher standards has been above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. We wanted to ascertain whether pupils make equally strong progress in other subjects.
- Leaders have implemented a rich, well-thought-out curriculum. They have recently undertaken a review of the curriculum to ensure that pupils make strong gains in their subject-specific skills and knowledge over time.
- In art, pupils engage in experimenting with a wide variety of media. Right from the beginning of Year 1, they develop an understanding of colours. They study and experiment, mixing primary and secondary colours. Their progress becomes evident when they apply such knowledge in producing artwork that is inspired by famous artists.
- Pupils make strong progress in science. In key stage 1, pupils demonstrate an understanding of animals by looking at different ways of grouping them. From using basic classification such as the type of food that animals eat, pupils are supported to understand more complex categories, including identifying warm-blooded and cold-blooded animals.
- When quizzed about their knowledge of history, pupils showed a deep understanding of cause and effect of events. They are able to talk about historical periods in detail. They are familiar with some significant persons in history. They are also able to demonstrate understanding of the passage of time in relation to events in history.
- Our third line of enquiry considered whether leaders are taking appropriate action to improve pupils' attendance rates and to reduce persistent absence. You have

carefully analysed the attendance information, and you work closely with families and external agencies. School leaders ensure that strategies are in place which leave no stone unturned to ensure that pupils attend on time, all the time. Consequently, attendance rates have improved over the past two years.

- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. This reflects the relentless work of the attendance team, which uses its extensive knowledge of pupils and their families to tailor effective interventions. However, persistent absence remains above the national average, and leaders recognise this is as an ongoing focus of their work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Actions are sustained to improve pupils' attendance and to reduce persistent absence.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Greenshaw Learning Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Sutton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Edison David
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and members of your senior leadership team. I spoke to a number of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and their views on learning and behaviour. I held discussions with representatives of the Greenshaw Learning Trust. I met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with the chair of the Board of Trustees. I analysed 27 responses to the pupil survey and 30 responses to the staff survey. I considered 51 responses to Parent View. I also considered documentation provided by you, and information on the school's website. I looked at the single central record of staff suitability checks, and the school's analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with school leaders, I visited classes to observe learning, and I looked at samples of pupils' work across all subjects. I listened to pupils read across the ability range.