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Mrs Andrea Mills
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Dear Mrs Mills

Short inspection of Harewood Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 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. You provide strong leadership and sustain an unwavering drive with your colleagues for consistent improvement. You and other leaders, including governors, set high expectations of pupils and staff. As a team, you closely monitor the quality of education provided by the school and plan effectively for improvement. You lead this team by example to ensure a culture of respect and tolerance. In particular, your collective endeavours maintain an uncompromising commitment to including pupils and meeting their academic and personal needs equally and effectively. This is evident in the strengthened way that teachers now assess and target pupils' different needs to secure their progress from the moment they enter the school. You and your staff team maintain what one parent described as, 'A warm and welcoming place where my son has always been happy and thrived.' All who responded to the staff questionnaire indicated that they are proud to work in a school where leaders encourage and support them fully in their work.

During the inspection, I was particularly impressed by the willingness and developing ability of pupils to think deeply and explain their ideas when questioned by adults. I was also impressed by the way pupils help each other to thrive in and out of lessons. Their genuine commitment as 'restorative stars' in resolving disputes between pupils at breaktimes was exemplary. Consequently, pupils achieve well both academically and personally.

At the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to strengthen teaching so that

a greater number of pupils made more than expected progress. You continue to give this high priority, especially by raising the level of challenge in the work presented to the pupils. You have also established a full and stimulating curriculum. You use topics well, such as by investigating the effect of exercise on pulse and heart rates in science to develop pupils' skills and boost their enjoyment in learning. School assessments and scrutiny of pupils' current work in books show that most pupils make strong progress and achieve well. However, these checks show that some pupils with the ability to do so are not yet achieving high standards. At times, writing skills, particularly by boys and in spelling, are not fully developed.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, and staff ensure a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. They are diligent in fulfilling their shared duty to keep pupils safe. Leaders and administrative staff rigorously check and ensure that all adults working with pupils are safe to do so. Staff at all levels are well trained in safeguarding practice. They use their knowledge of individual pupils well to deal with any concerns that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders work closely with other services and families to ensure that children are kept safe.

Teachers have intensified the way they identify and support the breadth of pupils' needs on entry to the school. Staff provide high-quality pastoral care. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe in school and parents too are confident that this is the case. Pupils are taught how to stay safe and know, for example, how to use computers and access the internet safely. Pupils say that, 'Staff care about us and sort things out quickly.' School records show that you respond promptly to any concerns about bullying and resolve problems effectively. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire agreed that their children are well looked after and feel safe at school.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders ensure that more pupils, particularly those who had previously reached high standards for their age, attain high standards by the time they leave the school.
- You continue to place a strong emphasis on securing the best progress possible for all pupils. You have taken effective actions to extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. You have provided additional training for staff, including learning support assistants, in developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Teachers and assistants in all classes and during additional learning sessions have raised their expectations and increased the level of challenge in the work they present to pupils. As a result, the proportion of pupils working at higher standards for their age is increasing across the school. This is typically evident in the work in their books and most notably in their written reflections and improved ability to explain their thinking. This was seen, for example, in Year 6 as pupils rose to the challenge of solving calculations using equivalent fractions.
- You are also having increasing success in improving the progress in reading and writing of pupils whose previous attainment was high. Teachers routinely use

interesting texts during lessons to motivate pupils. The widening range of books in the new, well-equipped and attractive library, is similarly increasing pupils' appetite to read more frequently. As a result, more pupils read fluently, comprehend new terms and confidently infer and predict outcomes.

- Teachers place a greater emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary through providing them with interesting topics. These developments are enriching pupils' writing skills. Pupils' work shows their improving ability to write reflective comments and edit their written work themselves. Pupils' eager responses to teachers' questions, as in Year 5 when considering the 'blood-thirsty' nature of Viking raids, show their deepened understanding of how to improve their writing.
- Given the high proportion of pupils previously identified as higher attainers your school development plan rightly maintains a focus on improving their progress.
- Over time, national assessments of pupils at the school have shown that girls outperform boys in reading and writing. Consequently, the next line of enquiry assessed how well leaders are extending boys' reading and writing skills and improving pupils' ability to spell words accurately.
- You ensure that teachers in all classes work effectively to stimulate boys' interest and enthusiasm in reading and writing. Teachers provide motivating books, such as 'Football Heroes', and base research and written work on interesting themes such as Pirates in Year 6 and Jungle Fever in Year 3. These topics prove equally attractive to girls. You and your staff also work supportively with parents to enlist their help in encouraging pupils to read more frequently at home. Teachers' more precise checks of pupils' skills when they start at the school have led to earlier and more effective development of pupils' phonics, handwriting and sentence-writing skills. You now provide a lunchtime reading club to help prevent pupils from falling behind. You recognise the need to sustain these developments to help boys achieve as well as girls.
- Teachers now place a similarly strong emphasis on improving pupils' spelling. The effectiveness of initiatives to widen pupils' vocabulary is especially evident in their topic work. For example, pupils enjoy using more adventurous vocabulary to describe historical events, such as evacuations during the Second World War. Increasingly, as they move through the school pupils respond well and aid their learning by checking and correcting their own and each other's work. This is having a positive effect. However, some pupils still spell common words incorrectly. This reduces the impact of their imaginative and well-structured writing.
- You work effectively to emphasise the importance of attendance to pupils and parents. As a result, most pupils attend regularly. However, rates of attendance fell last year. Hence my final line of enquiry was to establish what actions leaders and governors are taking to reduce absence.
- Your detailed records show that you and your staff carefully monitor attendance. With full support from governors, you provide families with the tailored help they need to secure their children's regular attendance. The strength of your pastoral help is clearly evident in this autumn term's improved, and again regular, attendance. This is being sustained despite an increase in the number of families experiencing difficulties that may lead to problems with attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue with their current strategies to improve pupils' progress further, particularly of pupils whose attainment was high previously, so that an increased proportion attain the higher standards by the time they leave the school
- teachers sustain the focus on promoting boys' skills and enjoyment in reading and writing and improving pupils' spelling.

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

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other staff who have leadership responsibilities. I met with the chair and two other members of the school's governing body and also met with a representative from the local authority. I visited classrooms with you and we collected and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual pupils during visits to classrooms and observed them reading and checking their work. I talked with pupils and staff at breaktime and lunchtime. In addition, I heard selected pupils reading and talked to them about their reading at home and school. I checked a range of documents relating to safeguarding with you, the assistant headteacher – who is also the leader of inclusion – and your administrative staff. We also examined details of pupils' attendance, pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and development plan. I took account of 47 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and 34 additional written comments from parents. I also took account of 25 responses to the staff survey.