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Joanna Bridges
Headteacher
Widney Junior School
Clifton Crescent
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West Midlands
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Dear Mrs Bridges

Short inspection of Widney Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since you were promoted to the role of headteacher in September 2018, you have built on the strengths that you inherited and taken further action to improve the school.

You, and your senior leaders and governors, have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education that you provide. Leaders closely analyse information about all aspects of the school's work to take insightful action to make further improvements.

Widney Junior School has a positive, inclusive and aspirational culture. Leaders and staff welcome pupils from all backgrounds and take effective action to help them do well. Pupils are thoroughly prepared for life in modern Britain and consistently attain academic outcomes above the national averages. Attainment of the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics has improved over the last three years.

The quality of teaching is improving and there is some very strong practice in the school. Consequently, pupils are now making better progress across the curriculum, including in writing. Staff consistently provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in a range of subjects. As a result of higher expectations, greater subject knowledge and an enhanced curriculum offer, outcomes in writing have improved since the last inspection.

Pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They are polite, respectful and considerate. Pupils play happily and safely during social time and the dining hall is a calm and orderly environment.

Staff work well with parents and the wider community. Communication is good, and the school website contains useful information in an easily accessible format. Almost all parents, who made their views known during the inspection, would recommend the school.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors have a range of skills and experience that they use to offer leaders appropriate support and challenge. They access useful training and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Governors' regular visits to the school are well organised. They take place when planned and useful reports are shared with the rest of the governing body. Link meetings between governors and staff help to hold staff to account, keep governors informed about all aspects of the school's work and maintain a focus on school improvement. Leadership and management have been strengthened since the last inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, well supported by the governor who has an oversight of this aspect of the school's work, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern. Staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, including those that are pertinent to the local area. They know how to recognise signs that a pupil may be at risk.

Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to help to protect pupils, and pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils, staff and parents told the inspector that they think that pupils are safe in school.

Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors. Record-keeping is thorough, and information is stored securely. Keeping children safe is seen as everyone's responsibility as part of the school's strong safeguarding culture.

Inspection findings

- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work well together and they provide strong and effective leadership. Governance has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection and leadership is developing at all levels. All staff have areas of responsibility. Many aspects of the school's work, including the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the use of the pupil premium and safeguarding arrangements, are very well led.

- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points at Widney Junior School. In 2018, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally in reading. They made less progress than other pupils in mathematics and writing. As a result of targeted intervention, current pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding are making improved progress in these areas. However, over time, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND has not matched that of other pupils.
- Strengths identified in the quality of teaching at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and developed further. The school provides a positive learning environment and displays are used well to celebrate pupils' successes and aid their learning. Established routines, productive relationships and effective use of praise help pupils fully engage in their studies.
- There is evidence of some very strong teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 6. When teaching is most effective, staff have high expectations of all pupils and activities challenge pupils to make accelerated progress from their different starting points. Staff use questions carefully to check understanding and deepen knowledge, physical resources aid learning and academic language is insisted upon. Teaching assistants are well deployed and time is used well. However, not all teaching is consistently of the highest standard.
- Pupils are proud of their school and want to do well. Most display exemplary conduct and staff help pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour to make improvements. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are declining and exclusions are rare.
- Most pupils have excellent attendance. However, despite improvements to attendance rates, pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils are absent more often than other groups of pupils. A small number of pupils who are regularly absent affect the overall attendance rates for these groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teaching is consistently strong so that all pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress
- attendance continues to improve by ensuring that all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, are rarely absent.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector considered 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the vice-chair. He had telephone conversations with the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Short visits were made to every classroom with the headteacher. The inspector spoke to pupils and observed behaviour in lessons and during social time.
- The inspector analysed 20 responses and 12 free-text comments made by parents on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the inspector looked at published information on the school's website.