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Mr Clive Searle
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Searle

Short inspection of Worthington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2019, 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 December 2014.

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 will be a section 5 inspection.

You continue to be an inspirational headteacher who leads by example in your many and varied roles, both within school and across the local authority. One comment reflected the views of several parents, who say that you lead with 'enthusiasm, integrity and compassion'. You ensure that staff morale is exceptionally high by valuing all that staff do and making sure that everyone works together as a team. You say in your mission statement that 'we only reach for the highest' and that was certainly evident during the inspection. You and your staff have a steely determination to ensure that pupils reach their full potential, both in their personal development and academic achievement.

You, senior leaders and governors reflect carefully on the school's performance and have an accurate view of its strengths and priorities. For example, governors told me some of the ways in which teachers plan activities that motivate pupils to develop their writing skills. The school improvement plans include precise actions to make sure that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, and for life more generally.

At the previous inspection in 2014, the inspectors asked the leadership team, including governors, to raise pupils' achievement. You have done this by providing high-quality, ongoing training for teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers ensure that teaching assistants have the skills to support pupils both within class and through a range of interventions. No time is wasted and both teaching assistants and volunteers provide bespoke support that enables pupils to improve their work and develop their resilience for learning. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that pupils correct errors in their work and build pupils' skills in editing and improving their own work and that of their peers.

Inspectors also asked that teachers plan activities in early years that are purposeful and linked to children's learning, especially when activities take place outdoors. You and the governors have invested in developing the outdoor area since the previous inspection. Teachers skilfully plan activities that are carefully linked to children's learning. For example, during the inspection, we observed how teachers had set up a crime scene in the classroom to develop children's speech and language skills. Children were explaining how Humpty Dumpty may have fallen off the wall. Outdoors, children were using soft bricks to build a wall and developing their numeracy skills through measuring its height. Children's vocabulary was also developed when deciding which wall was higher and which was lower. The children screeched with excitement as they enjoyed learning through well-thought-out activities.

Inspectors also asked that leaders and managers, including governors, develop clear ways of ensuring that targets in the school improvement plan are met. You have ensured that each subject leader creates an action plan for their subject to contribute to whole-school improvement. These plans have precise targets and timescales by which to measure the impact of actions. You provide time for leaders to monitor progress in their areas of responsibility through observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. Subject leaders know the rates of progress of individual children across the school. This allows them to help teachers in tailoring support and interventions for those pupils who fall behind with their learning. Middle leaders, senior leaders and governors leave no stone unturned when regularly checking on and evaluating the impact of actions taken to continually improve all aspects of the school.

As a result, children get off to a flying start in early years and this continues across key stage 1 and key stage 2. Consequently, the proportions of pupils reaching expected and higher standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above the national averages. Pupils are clearly being well prepared for the next stage in their education and for life generally. This is one of the many reasons why parents and carers describe Worthington as a 'fabulous school, with strong leadership and passionate teachers'. Without exception, all the parents who spoke to me before school started and all who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend this school.

Pupils are eager to come to school and keen to learn. This is reflected in consistently above-average levels of attendance of pupils. In a meeting with a

group of pupils, they described this school as 'like a big family' and they clearly make new pupils welcome at whatever point they join the school. Pupils are respectful towards each other, staff, volunteers and visitors to their school community.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated safeguarding leader, together with your deputy headteacher in her role as deputy safeguarding leader, you ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. You make sure that staff fully understand their duty and follow systems and procedures for logging concerns. You ensure that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children. When I arrived at the start of the inspection, the effectiveness of procedures to check on those visiting the school was clear for me to see.

You make sure that the promotion of safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. You provide staff with regular training that is up to date, so that they and members of the governing body understand the current guidance. You are prompt in making referrals to the local authority. You work well with a range of external agencies to secure expertise to support pupils' welfare, as and when necessary. You and your staff provide exceptional care and support for pupils and their families. Parents told me how well they are supported when, as a family, they go through challenging times.

Inspection findings

- As part of this inspection, I explored the strategies that leaders use to develop pupils' writing skills. The deputy headteacher, who is the leader for English, has undertaken research and worked with external consultants to delve into strategies that help pupils develop their writing skills. This has led to leaders and teachers planning in depth to provide opportunities that motivate pupils to write for a wide variety of purposes. In early years, staff plan activities to develop speaking, listening and writing skills in all the activity areas, both outdoors and in the classroom. For example, the teaching assistant in a Reception class was encouraging a group of children to describe pictures of dinosaurs. This helped them to build a bank of vocabulary, which they later used for their writing. Meanwhile, in the same class, a group of children with the teacher were confidently explaining the meaning of the words 'extinct' and 'carnivore' using full sentences. This demonstrates how well staff in early years are promoting speaking and exposing children to new words and their meanings to support their writing.
- In Year 2, a teacher was using an extract from the class book, 'Dick Whittington', to explain the use of apostrophes. Pupils clearly demonstrated their understanding through the completion of sentences, carefully planned to challenge the range of abilities in the class. When errors were made, both the teacher and the teaching assistant used effective questioning to help pupils to check and edit their work. Pupils use their individual 'Tricks of the Trade Writing Manual' to remind them of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar, which

supports their accuracy in writing very well indeed. In key stage 2, work in pupils' books demonstrated a balance of writing long and short pieces in a range of genres. These included evaluating a performance, identifying language features and text organisation in a non-chronological report, diary entries, script writing and writing character profiles. Teachers and teaching assistants provide many opportunities for pupils to engage in conversations and share ideas that, in turn, support their writing skills. You continue to prioritise developing pupils' vocabulary to improve their writing skills. Pupils make at least good progress with their writing skills and many do even better as they move through the school.

- You and your staff are clearly dedicated to providing equal opportunities for all pupils. You use additional funding for those pupils identified as disadvantaged to provide bespoke support to meet their particular needs. Many disadvantaged pupils also have additional barriers to learning. Precise plans are in place to develop pupils' resilience for learning and support the emotional and social development of individuals. Parents told me that this support extends to the wider family. As yours is an inclusive school, you genuinely welcome pupils with a diverse range of needs. You provided evidence of pupils developing personally and achieving well here when they have failed in other schools and local authorities. This supports the information that parents shared with me. You and your staff ensure that, like their peers, disadvantaged pupils do well at Worthington.
- You ensure that the curriculum offers an extensive and inspiring range of learning experiences. Teachers give freely of their time to organise residential trips to outdoor education centres, and older pupils told me how much they are looking forward to this. Pupils get first-hand experience of the range of cultures and faiths in Britain today. Pupils told me about their visit to a synagogue. 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' has deepened their understanding of Judaism, some of the causes of conflict in the world and the importance of living in a democratic society. You, along with other leaders, ensure that all aspects of the primary curriculum are covered and that there is an appropriate balance between subjects. Developing pupils' interest in, and experience of the arts is central to the school. Pupils in the choir have performed at the Manchester Arena and there was evidence of how much they had enjoyed their project on the development of popular music over the decades. Staff raise pupils' aspirations, leading to pupils considering careers as engineers, vets, teachers and dancers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to focus on broadening pupils' vocabulary, in order for pupils to improve their writing further.

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

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I observed teaching and learning jointly with you. I held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body, and with you as the designated safeguarding leader together with the deputy headteacher as the deputy safeguarding leader. I analysed 85 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke informally with parents at the school gates, to seek their views. I also took account of 82 free-text responses from parents. I analysed the 19 staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and spoke to several staff informally during the day. I held a meeting with pupils, spoke informally with pupils during breaks and in lessons, and analysed the 19 pupil questionnaire responses.

During the inspection, I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents; minutes of governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation; records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; the school's website; school policies; pupils' work; and their reading logs.