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11 February 2019

Mr David Maguire
Interim Headteacher
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Dear Mr Maguire

Short inspection of Westfield Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 June 2015.

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.**

The school has gone through a period of significant turbulence in leadership and changes to staffing during the past year. Governors and the trust have acted decisively to address the issues and, as interim headteacher, you are creating stability within the school as it moves forward. Your self-evaluation provides an honest and realistic analysis of the school, identifying areas for improvement within the school development plan, which provides a focus for improving outcomes for pupils.

At the previous inspection, your predecessor was asked to improve the quality of teaching by raising expectations of what pupils can do, matching tasks more closely to the needs of different abilities in a range of subjects, and offering greater challenge for the most able. A number of new teachers have recently been appointed to the school and, while teaching and learning are improving, you recognise that there are still inconsistencies across the school, particularly in key stage 2.

In 2018, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with national averages. However, the most able pupils made less progress than other pupils. Progress of the most able pupils was significantly below national averages in writing and there was

underachievement at greater depth in writing and mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong from their starting points in almost all year groups. Changes have been made to the teaching arrangements in Years 5 and 6 to accelerate the progress of current pupils. However, concerns regarding attainment and progress in upper key stage 2, particularly in Year 5, remain.

This is a welcoming school, with a vibrant learning environment that encourages pupils to engage in learning and celebrates their success. You have established expectations for the school regarding pupils' behaviour and learning: 'We are kind, we are respectful and we always do our best.' These are at the heart of every day.

An area for improvement at the last inspection was to improve provision in the Nursery classroom and outdoor area. This has been addressed, as there is good provision both within the classroom setting and outdoors across all areas of learning. Adults intervene appropriately to support or extend children's learning and often follow children's interests. For example, children were observed watching ice melting, with support from an adult to measure the volume of water.

Parents and carers are generally positive about the school and the recent improvements from changes in leadership. One parent summed this up by saying: 'This year my children are coming home and talking about what they have learned. It's great to see them enjoy their time at school and be excited to learn new things.' They recognise that there have been improvements in communication and that staff are more approachable if they have concerns. Some parents expressed the view that they would like more information about how well their child is doing in school.

Governors understand their roles and responsibilities. They provide support and increasing challenge to leaders in tackling aspects of school improvement. Unity Schools Partnership has provided a high level of support to the school in developing a stable team and the capacity within it to improve. The continued development of the leadership team and subject leaders is essential for future school improvement to improve teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong and effective culture of safeguarding in the school. Visitors are reminded that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff know the pupils well, and, along with training, this enables them to be vigilant in identifying and reporting concerns. Pupils who may be vulnerable and their families receive timely and effective support. Detailed records are stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All of the required checks are made on the suitability of adults to work in the school. These are recorded carefully and efficiently on the single central record. Staff and governors receive regular training and updates in all aspects of safeguarding. The school site is well maintained, and kept tidy and secure. Regular health and safety walks are undertaken, so that issues are identified and addressed.

Pupils say that they feel safe in the school and know who to speak to if they have a concern. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Pupils who I spoke to did not feel there was any bullying, but were confident that any issues would be swiftly resolved. The majority of parents felt that their children were safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- There are strengths in teaching and learning within the school and pupils are generally motivated and engaged in these lessons. However, there are variations in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in key stage 2. Learning objectives are not always clearly focused, so that pupils do not always understand what they are learning and what they need to do to achieve the learning objective in the lesson. Teachers use questioning well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils referred to Samuel Pepys's diary, making inferences from the text and giving an insight into how he was feeling.
- Where expectations are high, pupils respond and produce work of a good quality. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the presentation of work. Challenge for the most able pupils is more evident in mathematics, when pupils are able to choose their level of challenge, than in literacy lessons. Teachers do not always use assessment within lessons to adapt and modify tasks to meet the changing needs of pupils and provide greater challenge.
- Teachers plan a broad and balanced curriculum, through topic themes to inspire and excite pupils. High-quality texts are used to motivate pupils to learn and develop their vocabulary. However, pupils are not given enough chances to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English. The development of assessment for the foundation subjects is in its early stages.
- Many middle leaders are inexperienced in leading a subject area. While they are well supported by the headteacher and trust, they do not yet fully understand their role in monitoring their area of responsibility, and it is too soon to see their impact.
- You have introduced a new 'Code of Conduct' which, along with clear expectations, is having a positive impact on improving behaviour at Westfield. There are appropriate strategies in place to support pupils whose behaviour is more challenging, including time in the 'reflection room' or the 'repair room'. In these rooms, pupils are supported in thinking about the changes that they need to make to improve their behaviour before returning to lessons. Leaders take time to look for patterns of behaviour and aim to tackle the cause. As a result, pupils generally show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. One pupil described the improvement in behaviour by saying: 'You get praised for good behaviour so feel proud of yourself.'
- Attendance is improving, and there are systems in place to ensure that any absences from school are followed up. Pupils value the opportunities to celebrate good attendance through newsletters and certificates presented during assemblies.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leadership of the curriculum areas continues to develop so that new or inexperienced leaders understand the part they play in raising standards of achievement
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improves so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that pupils understand what they are learning and what they need to do in order to achieve the learning objective within the lesson
 - using assessment within lessons to respond swiftly when pupils are ready to move on in their learning, so that all pupils, particularly the most able, are fully challenged
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to write at length, practise their basic writing skills in other subjects and improve the presentation of their work
 - developing systems for assessment across the broader curriculum.

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 the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Pauline MacMillan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We discussed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about pupils' progress and attainment. During the inspection, I held meetings with you, three subject leaders, four governors including the chair of the governing body, various representatives from the Unity Schools Partnership including the chief executive officer, and administrative staff. Together, we visited classes to observe teaching and learning. I looked at a sample of pupils' current work across a range of subjects. I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning and met with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience. I also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, as they moved around the classes and at playtimes. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children. I considered the views of parents through 46 responses to Parent View, 24 free-text

messages and one complaint received during the inspection. I took account of seven responses from staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire.