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Mrs C Draper
Executive Headteacher
Short Heath Junior School
Pennine Way
Willenhall
West Midlands
WV12 4DS

Dear Mrs Draper

No formal designation inspection of Short Heath Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 2 April 2019 with Sue Morris-King, Her Majesty's Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave us and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills was concerned about behaviour at the school.

Evidence

Inspectors considered evidence that included:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussions with pupils
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders and staff.

Having evaluated the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

The school is a two-form-entry junior school, for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. It is smaller than the average-sized primary school and currently has 241 pupils on roll. The school has been part of the Short Heath Federation since April 2006. The majority of pupils are from a White British background and few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan. An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. Few pupils move school during the academic year. There have been no changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection, in May 2017, although there have been some changes to staffing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

You, the head of school and the wider leadership team have created a highly inclusive school that welcomes all pupils irrespective of their backgrounds and takes positive steps to meet their needs. Pupils generally take a pride in their work and feel well supported by staff.

In the lessons visited during the inspection, behaviour was largely positive. Lessons were mostly calm and purposeful. The majority of pupils respond well to adults and relationships between staff and pupils are constructive. Teachers and teaching assistants generally model the behaviour that they expect from pupils and act as good role models.

Teachers mostly have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They are supportive of individual pupils' needs and give clear explanations and instructions. Most pupils are, therefore, engaged in their lessons and are willing to 'have a go'. This was actively demonstrated when we observed the great majority of pupils trying hard and concentrating well during end-of-term tests. Additionally, some teachers and teaching assistants use a range of effective strategies to engage more-reluctant pupils in their learning. However, expectations of behaviour are currently not high enough in Year 3. This results in some low-level disruption and negative interactions between pupils. Leaders are working with staff to address these concerns, but improvements are required to ensure that behaviour is consistently positive.

At breaktime and lunchtime, most pupils play together cooperatively. There are some resources and activities on offer for pupils to play with, but these are limited, and pupils say that they are not always available. While there is adult supervision at all times, adults are not always clearly visible to the pupils and they do not stand in strategic positions to optimise their views of all parts of the playground. Pupils generally respond well to adults' instructions and entry into the lunch-hall or back into class is smooth. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils hosted a lunch for their mothers or grandmothers. This was a positive experience for everyone attending.

Almost all pupils are smartly dressed and wear school uniform. They follow clear routines on arrival at school and during the school day. Overall attendance, at 96.1%, remains broadly in line with the national average, while the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent is a little below the national average. You ensure that good attendance has a high priority across the school and you actively discourage parents from taking holidays during term-time.

Since the last inspection, rates of exclusion have dropped considerably and now occur rarely, and only as a last resort. You and your team provide a range of tailored support and effective intervention strategies to meet the needs of pupils with more complex behavioural difficulties. This includes making appropriate adaptations to the curriculum that some pupils follow. Staff work hard to ensure that strategies are personalised for individual classes and pupils. Your team works closely with external agencies to support this work. The local authority values the work that the school does to support inclusion.

A few months ago, you and your leadership team identified that the school's approach to managing behaviour was no longer working for all pupils. As a result, you have recently introduced a new behaviour strategy. You and the governors are clear about the reasons for making this change and you have involved parents, through the parent council, in the process. Nevertheless, some parents do not feel that the new system has been explained well enough. They are concerned about whether well-behaved pupils receive the recognition that they deserve and whether actions taken following poor behaviour are appropriate. During the inspection, you and your leadership team explained the policy clearly to me and my colleague. We could see that it has been written with the needs of your pupils in mind. You noted that you will continue to review and adapt the policy as needed. You acknowledged that the draft policy on the school's website was overly long and complex and that you had already produced a simpler version of it. It is clear, though, that there is a perception among some parents that leaders do not listen to their concerns. You intend to address this partially through your plan to offer more workshop sessions for parents to explain developments in the school.

Pupils say that they understand the new approach and that they find it helpful to know what is expected of them and what will happen if they do not conform. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, have received training to support the new strategy. Pupils spoken to during the inspection reported some variation in behaviour, but most felt that staff deal with any incidents appropriately.

Along with the leadership team, you regularly hold detailed conversations with teachers about individual pupils' needs and agree strategies to manage these. However, currently, you do not analyse incidents of poor behaviour sufficiently well. As a result, neither you, nor the governors, have a clear enough overview of patterns of behaviour across the school, nor of the initial impact that the new behaviour strategy is having on pupils' behaviour.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that behaviour is of an equally high standard across all year groups.
- Ensure that pupils' breaktimes and lunchtimes are well supervised and include enough structured activities to encourage good behaviour.
- Ensure that the newly introduced behaviour strategy has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and is clearly understood by all.
- Continue to work to with parents to ensure that they are engaged with developments in the school and feel listened to.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector