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Mrs Gill Austerfield
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Austerfield

Short inspection of Asquith Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 May 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 2015.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have successfully managed the increase in pupil numbers and have recruited skilled senior leaders to support you in your efforts. As a result, you now have a strong senior leadership team. The collective skills of the senior leadership team are ensuring that the school continues to improve and that changes are managed effectively.

You have continued to nurture a welcoming and inclusive environment for pupils. The school's ethos is understood by all. Pupils and parents value greatly the support they receive from staff. You say that your staff are your greatest asset because they universally keep the pupils' needs at the centre of their work. This leads to a happy school where pupils flourish and staff morale is high.

Teachers are well supported by you and your leadership team through regular and pertinent staff training. Teachers feel that they are listened to and can ask for advice at any time. They feel that your feedback is supportive in enabling them to improve their practice further.

Classrooms are bright, organised and resourced well. Classrooms have a combination of displays which help pupils with their learning and displays which celebrate pupils' work. You have high standards for the quality of work that goes on display to maintain high expectations.

Governors bring a range of skills and expertise to the governing body and are highly involved in improvement planning. They know the school well because they make

regular visits to the school. During their visits, they hold school leaders to account by asking questions and following up previously agreed actions.

At the last inspection, you were asked to accelerate pupils' progress in writing. You have taken actions to improve this area of the school's work, but this has not had an impact on pupils' progress. At the same time, it is notable that you have been very careful to maintain the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and reading. As a result, above average proportions of pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2 attain the expected standard in mathematics and reading.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. The classrooms are well resourced with carefully planned activities linked to different areas of learning that children can access independently. This means that all children are engaged and focused. Teachers have been working hard to involve parents more in their children's learning. Those parents who I talked to expressed how much more involved they feel and how much they like the new online system for sharing their child's learning. For example, following a visit from one of the parents who is a scientist, I observed children using the equipment that they brought. The children were using pipettes and petri dishes to mix colours with enjoyment. They told me it was because they were being scientists.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous to staff and to visitors. In classrooms, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and follow their instructions. Pupils walk sensibly around the school and the lunch hall is a calm environment in which pupils can eat and socialise well together. Most of the pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey strongly agreed that pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good.

Safeguarding is effective.

You keep safeguarding as a high priority. You have established a dedicated team. The team works closely with families and with other agencies to ensure pupils get the support that they need when they need it. Staff training is up to date, so they know how to spot any signs of abuse and how to raise concerns. Where concerns are raised, you and your team act swiftly and appropriately.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. To ensure that the school is doing all it can, leaders and governors requested an audit of safeguarding to be undertaken by the local authority. This audit highlighted a number of strengths in the support that Asquith Primary offers to pupils.

Pupils told me that they feel safe. They feel that they are listened to if they have any worries and they are confident that the teachers in school will help them to resolve things straight away. Pupils also told me how they learn about keeping safe when using the internet and how the school site makes them feel safe. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and those who talked to me at the start of the school day agree that the school keeps their children safe. Many parents

commented on how much they value the support that you provide. One parent said: 'This school has been a life saver for me.'

Inspection findings

- You ensure that pupils are competent writers by developing teachers' subject knowledge and improving pupils' understanding of correct grammar and punctuation. Although pupils show that they can apply this knowledge in their own writing and a higher proportion of pupils are meeting the expected standard, there is a lack of cohesion across the whole school about different writing styles and purposes.
- Teachers teach the grammar skills pupils need to be successful writers and provide them with opportunities to apply these skills in their writing. Teachers use a range of different texts and subject matter to provide the pupils with a stimulus for their writing, for example writing descriptions of the characters in the 'Lighthouse Keeper' stories. Pupils demonstrated that they could apply the new words they had learned and used words like 'concocted' in their writing. However, some of the choices teachers make to support pupils limit opportunities for them to write at length, which impacts on the progress of some pupils.
- Another focus for the inspection, was to review pupils' progress across key stage 2. This is because disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who are middle attainers, made less progress than their peers in 2018. You and your leadership team considered how you monitored progress of these pupils. As a result of more focused and frequent checks, and action taken based on these checks, disadvantaged pupils are now making more progress than previously. Middle attainers have benefited from more challenging teaching linked to their needs and abilities. These pupils are also now making much better progress than previously.
- At the time of the last inspection, pupils in key stage 1 were not always given books to read that matched their needs. You have implemented a more systematic approach to organising books so that they are clearly labelled in line with pupils' phonics abilities and reading ages. This encourages pupils to read and, as a result, their progress has improved. Pupils are increasingly fluent readers and the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in reading at key stage 1 is above average. An above average proportion of pupils also achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Finally, we looked at pupils' attendance. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school, including some of the school's vulnerable pupils. At the last inspection, attendance was broadly average. However, over the past few years it has fallen and is now below average.
- You and the governors have appointed an attendance officer to the school. Supported by the local authority, the school has implemented a new strategy for checking attendance. There are signs that this renewed focus on the importance of good attendance is having a positive impact on improving pupils' overall attendance and in reducing the proportion of pupils regularly away from school. The detailed analysis to review pupils' attendance means you know who needs

more support to help them attend more regularly. Nevertheless, pupils' absence remains higher than the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing across the curriculum improves so that all pupils at least reach the expected standard in writing
- opportunities across the whole curriculum are provided for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills in a range of styles and for different purposes
- improve pupils' attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly away from school.

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

Yours sincerely

Eleanore Pickard
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, phase leaders, the designated senior leader for child protection, and the safeguarding team. I talked to four teachers, five members of the governing body, several parents at the start of the school day and groups of pupils informally at lunchtime. I also listened to a group of pupils from key stage 1 read. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

All lesson observations were undertaken with you or the deputy headteacher. Together, we also looked at work in pupils' books from all year groups.

I examined a range of documentation, including documents relating to staff recruitment, attendance, governance and safeguarding. I took account of the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. I took account of the 89 views made by parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire and the written text comments made by 72 parents. I considered the 37 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 92 responses to Ofsted's pupils' survey.