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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Trevor Patterson
Executive Headteacher
Thackley Primary School
Town Lane
Thackley
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD10 8PJ

Dear Mr Patterson

Short inspection of Thackley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 June 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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your effective team have been focused on creating a warm and welcoming place for pupils to learn. During my visit to the school, your ethos of creating happy memories could be seen through the enrichment activities you have on offer. Pupils told me how much they enjoy the residential trips they go on, additional sporting activities and visits to different places of worship.

Thackley is a rapidly improving school. You are ambitious for the school to be as good as you know it can be. All of the staff who responded to the survey said that they saw improvements in the school since the last inspection.

At that time, you were asked to support most-able pupils to reach higher standards and to support disadvantaged pupils to narrow the differences in achievement between them and their peers. You and your team have had successes in addressing both of these areas, particularly in reading and in mathematics. This is because you have maintained a focus on making sure all teaching is consistently effective. You also reviewed the range of additional support and intervention groups that were on offer to ensure that this was enhancing what happens in lessons. As a result, pupils do not miss key learning time anymore.

The early years foundation stage is a strength of the school and there is a real

passion from your head of school for getting children off to a strong start. The carefully thought-out classrooms and outdoor space are very well resourced with a range of different materials and open-ended activities. As a result of this effective planning, children are highly engaged in purposeful play. During my visit, I observed children independently writing their own version of 'mixed up fairy stories'. This is because teachers plan opportunities for children to read and write, based on the stories that they have shared with them.

Governors are also ambitious for the school. They share the same vision for excellence as you do, without compromising on the broader enrichment and curriculum on offer at Thackley. Governors know the school well and know what the school needs to do to continue to improve and are confident in challenging school leaders in these areas. This means that both the governors and leaders stay focused on the areas which will have the most impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding remains a high priority. You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. School records of training show that you regularly provide staff with refresher safeguarding training and ongoing updates. You then routinely check staff understanding through discussions and questioning. These checks mean that you ensure all staff have a good understanding of school policies and current guidelines.

Where any concerns arise, your team act swiftly and appropriately to ensure that pupils are not at risk of harm. Your team told me how they work with a number of other agencies to provide pupils with the extra help they may need. These include, for example, children's social care, the early help team, school nurses and the local police.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They were able to describe the different things that they have learned about in lessons that help to keep them safe, such as awareness of dangers on the internet or online bullying.

Inspection findings

- In this inspection, I was interested to find out what you have done to improve pupils' progress in writing. This is because pupils have made less progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. You and your team have used research to develop your own approach to teaching writing. This is known as 'The Thackley Way'. You have provided teachers with training to support them in delivering this. Teachers use a stimulus such as a book or a video clip to engage pupils so that they really want to write. I could see how this is used when I visited lessons. I could also see how teachers model their high expectations to pupils and as a result, pupils employ a wide range of vocabulary in their writing. When I looked at books, you were able to show me how pupils are then given opportunities to apply what they have learned when they write in different areas of the curriculum. For example, in history, Year 6 pupils wrote a report on the

Second World War battles, and Year 2 pupils wrote about their local history topic, The Cottingley Fairies.

- I was also keen to look at your school's curriculum to see if pupils achieved as well in all subject areas as they do in English and mathematics. When we looked at pupils' books together, you and your leaders were able to show me how pupils made strong progress in a range of different subject areas. For example, in design and technology pupils became more adept at planning their own designs and at using the appropriate technical language. You have detailed plans in place to improve the school's curriculum even further.
- Another area I was interested in looking at was pupils' attendance. This is because over the past three years, the number of pupils who have been persistently absent from school has increased. Your team showed me how they support families to improve their attendance. They were able to demonstrate to me how their strategies are beginning to have an impact this year. However, attendance remains an issue requiring further focused attention.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the plans you have in place for improving pupils' skills in writing become firmly embedded so that progress in writing is as strong as the progress in reading and in mathematics
- the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school continues to reduce.

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

Yours sincerely

Eleanore Pickard
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During my one-day inspection, I met with you, your head of school and other school leaders. I also met with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair and a representative from the local authority.

I spoke informally to pupils and parents and also visited classes with you and the head of school. We jointly looked at a selection of pupils' books and I scrutinised a range of documents.

I also took into account the 130 pupil responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, 20

staff responses to the online staff survey and 40 free-text responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.