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Mrs Judith Mapp
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Dear Mrs Mapp

Short inspection of Westacre Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 2016, 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 November 2010.

This school continues to be good.

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

You provide strong leadership and have created a school where everyone understands what you expect and does their best. Whatever their starting points, pupils benefit from good-quality teaching, clear routines, kindly care and high expectations. Consequently, they settle in quickly, behave well and make good progress at school.

By the time pupils leave Westacre Infant School at the end of Year 2, they are very well prepared for junior school. Academic standards are above average and the range of subjects and experiences on offer equips pupils of all abilities with a broad set of skills and interests on which to build further.

You have preserved many worthwhile traditions and promote decent values in the school, while also embracing new developments in education. Consequently, the school has continued to improve. Even so, more could still be done to make sure that the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as possible. In addition, some of the school's routines for seeking, gathering and storing information would benefit from refreshment and updating.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are kept safe at school. The school grounds and building are well maintained. School equipment is in good working order and all areas are kept clean and tidy. Pupils can get a few bumps on the busy playground, but first-aid treatment is prompt and efficient when needed and staff training is up to date. Pupils display a good awareness of the rules and procedures that help to keep them safe and secure at school. They also say that staff will always listen to them if they have a worry and provide help when they need it.

Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare and pupils report that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. School records also show that this is the case. Observations made as part of this inspection noted that, in many instances, pupils' conduct around the school site is exemplary.

There are some aspects of practice, however, that could do with more attention from leaders and governors. Some of the administrative procedures relating to checks on staff are not well organised. This inspection found that all the proper checks at the time of staff recruitment had been carried out but some information was not readily available when requested. This information was gathered during the day and all was found to be in order. However, it is clear that school leaders and governors need to keep a closer eye on the routines for collecting and storing important information about the people who work at the school.

Inspection findings

- You provide strong and committed leadership. You have a very clear view of how things should be at Westacre Infant School and you make sure that your expectations are met. You have preserved many worthy traditions, such as family service at lunchtimes when a sense of harmonious community shines out. You understand the importance of self-worth and taking responsibility and place a high value on good manners and mutual respect. Pupils and staff respond well to this. The school is an orderly, calm community where a sense of purpose, industry and creativity can be felt and seen in every classroom. Pupils attend regularly, look smart and work hard. Everyone is expected to do their best, and they do.
- The previous inspection identified a few actions to improve the standard of pupils' writing: namely, improving marking and children's knowledge of letters and sounds and increasing the level of challenge for the most-able pupils. You have tackled all of these areas with success. The results from the Year 1 phonics check have risen over time and, in 2015, were above the national figure. The marking seen in pupils' books is clear and helpful. In addition, teachers often prompt pupils to examine their own, and one another's, work to check how well certain objectives have been met. Pupils do this well. During this inspection, pupils spoken to could explain how this process helps them to consider ways they could edit and improve their work further. The quantity and quality of writing produced by the most-able pupils is impressive. In fact, the quality of the writing seen in many pupils' books across the school is indicative of high expectations and effective

teaching. In some cases, pupils' writing is superb.

- Inspection evidence shows that, over time, the majority of children start school with a level of knowledge and skill typical for their age. In more recent years, a growing minority begin school with some catching up to do, particularly in aspects of their language and communication skills. In response, you have secured the services of a speech and language therapist. Having noted the success of this, you have plans to increase this provision so that this expertise can be made available to more pupils. Your attention to children's different early needs has continued to ensure that, year after year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of early years has been above the national figure.
- Over time, the standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been above average, but further ahead in reading and writing than in mathematics. Work seen in current pupils' books shows that good standards are being maintained. Indeed, and as already mentioned, some of the pupils' written work is excellent. When writing stories or discussing their work or talking to the class, pupils in the Year 2 classes in particular can call on a wide vocabulary. They write fluently and neatly and read clearly and with expression. The teaching of reading and writing at this school is a notable strength.
- There are also strengths in mathematics teaching. In lessons in the Reception classes, for example, children made strides forward in their understanding of shape as they experimented with the properties of different 3D shapes through a range of imaginatively planned activities. In one instance, children were spellbound by the teacher's descriptions of 'mystery' shapes and they listened intently before offering well-reasoned answers about the shapes being described. In fact, throughout the school, pupils' attentiveness to their teachers and to one another is commendable.
- While overall academic standards are above average, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils lags behind that of others. Pupil numbers are small and, because of this, it is difficult to form meaningful conclusions on the basis of one year's data. Nevertheless, for several years a small number of disadvantaged pupils have not kept up with others. You are alert to this and are keeping a close watch on the progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school to make sure that they do as well as they should.
- In all classes, teaching is effective, with strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. Information about pupils' current levels of understanding is used to good effect to plan worthwhile lessons that help them learn more. In common with many schools, Westacre Infant School is still finding its way with a new form of assessment now that National Curriculum levels have gone. To help you with this, you have employed some additional help from an assessment consultant. Levels of staff confidence with the new system are variable and more training is planned but, so far, you have made good progress with this new system. There are detailed records informed by careful checks on pupils' work. You understand the importance of establishing a consistent approach that is manageable, reliable and accurate and have prioritised this in your school development plans.

- The governing body reconstituted in September 2015 and governors are now bringing greater challenge to their roles. In the past, governors have not always had enough information about the school's performance. They have relied heavily on the information provided by you and, at times, this has limited the breadth of information available to them. This has now changed. Increasingly, governors think and plan strategically and are doing more to make sure they know what they should about the school's work.
- Parents who spoke with me expressed very positive views about the school. The vast majority agreed that the quality of teaching is good and that pupils are kept safe and do well at school. The 28 parental responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were more mixed. While most respondents would recommend the school to other parents, a few added written comments saying that they did not feel comfortable approaching school leaders to ask questions. Having said this, it is clear that leaders recently consulted with parents via a questionnaire to gather their views. The school calendar also shows that parents are regularly invited into school to look at pupils' work, should they wish to do so. Even so, school leaders should continue to examine ways to find out why some parents feel this way.
- Pupils behave very well at school. They are obedient, polite and inquisitive, and have the confidence to ask questions and share what they know. Worthy values, such as consideration and respect, are displayed in bold letters in the hall and on the website and clearly guide the words and actions of staff and pupils alike. Pupils' good understanding of the school's values, rules and high expectations means that they can make the most of the many activities on offer. Whether taking part in a lunchtime gymnastics club, singing a song, making music, creating a piece of artwork or building a model, pupils of all ages display cooperative attitudes and get on well with others.
- Attendance is above average and unexplained absences or lateness are rare.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils with great care to make sure that these pupils get the teaching and support they need in order to do as well as possible
- the administrative systems for recording safety-related information are checked regularly so that documents held in school records are readily available when needed
- they find out why a small number of parents feel anxious about approaching school leaders or asking questions.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Wolverhampton City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and two senior teachers. I carried out short observations of teaching and learning in all year groups, most of which were carried out with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with the Chair of Governors and talked with pupils on the playground, in lessons and in the dining hall. I spoke with some parents at the beginning of the school day and held a brief meeting with a representative from the local authority.

By the end of the inspection, there were 28 recent responses and 26 written comments on Parent View. I took account of these and noted the results of the school's own survey of parents' views. I looked at a number of documents, including: information about the work of governors, external reports about aspects of the school's work, pupils' progress information and the school's own evaluation of its performance. I also checked the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe and talked with several members of staff about safeguarding matters and record keeping.