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Miss Sharon Marsden
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Dear Miss Marsden

Short inspection of Waddingham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 2017, 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The pupils make good progress in mathematics and reach above-average standards. The teachers use assessment information routinely to plan work for the pupils that takes account of their different learning needs. This helps disadvantaged pupils, on the whole, to make steady and reasonable progress.

You identify astutely aspects of the school's work that now need developing. You use good evidence to reach your conclusions, including information about how much progress the pupils are making. This leads to well-conceived actions that bring about improvements. For example, the literacy leader has acted quickly to improve the pupils' knowledge and understanding of English grammar, punctuation and spelling, in the light of the results that were achieved in 2016. The signs are already present that the pupils' skills are improving, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.

The senior leaders and the governing body are less astute in evaluating precisely the impact of how the school makes use of the funding that it receives for disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, the school does not routinely or rigorously assess the impact of its work to promote equality. This makes it difficult for the school to ensure that the funding is always put to the best possible use and to be clear about how well it meets its statutory duties regarding equalities.

Nevertheless, the approaches taken by the school, both to supporting disadvantaged pupils and in promoting equalities, have a positive effect on the pupils' progress and on their attitudes, values and beliefs.

The school is good at building the pupils' confidence. For example, the additional support provided to disadvantaged pupils helps them to become increasingly independent in their learning, and so to be able to work alongside their classmates more often in lessons. The work begins in the early years.

The school's work to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to teach them about fundamental British values is a cornerstone of the school's ethos. It influences the pupils' attitudes, values, beliefs and views about the world around them. It contributes significantly to the school's warm and welcoming atmosphere, which is, understandably, valued highly by parents.

The pupils take on board the school's messages about fairness, tolerance of people's differences, and respect for others. They develop a good understanding of democracy, for their age, and its role in dealing with differences. Those values and attitudes are reflected in the pupils' consistently good behaviour.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are appropriately detailed. The staff know the pupils and their individual circumstances well. They know the school's policies and procedures for reporting any concerns that they may have regarding a pupil and they apply them consistently. The school takes good care when transferring records for pupils who move to another school, making sure that the records have been received and checking also that the pupils have arrived. When the occasion demands, the school complies with the local authority's requirements for reporting pupils who may be missing from education.

The pupils feel safe and happy at the school. They are taught about different ways to keep themselves safe and well. For example, they are given practical advice about how to stay safe online, they have the opportunity to work as junior safety officers, learning about road safety, and they have taken the initiative themselves, through the school council, to promote healthy eating.

The school has a reasonable range of approaches to dealing with pupil absences. Absences are followed up carefully, and the school takes steps to establish a pupil's whereabouts. The school's efforts result in short-term improvements in the attendance of pupils whose attendance is too low, particularly the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has reduced to a small number the pupils who are persistently absent. Too often, however, the improvements in the attendance of those individuals are not sustained.

Inspection findings

- The school's pupil premium strategy does not make explicit the barriers to learning faced by the pupils. This makes it difficult for the governing body to be sure that the actions taken to support the pupils are the most effective in meeting the pupils' needs.
- The disadvantaged pupils are given carefully considered and timely additional support, which assists them with their learning.
- You have used professional development and training opportunities effectively to improve the staff's skills, particularly in assessing how well the pupils are doing in literacy.
- The pupils are encouraged to have a sense of ambition and not to be limited by gender stereotypes. For example, mathematics and science, popular subjects among the pupils generally, are equally as popular with the girls as with the boys, and I spoke with girls who already wanted to make a career in the sciences.
- Instances of bullying and of the use of derogatory language, such as racist, or homophobic language, are very rare.
- The pupils' attendance is affected adversely when the school has not gained the full support of parents in reducing high levels of absence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they evaluate rigorously the impact of the school's use of the pupil premium funding and of the school's equalities scheme
- the efforts to reduce high levels of absence, particularly among pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are sustained and, where possible, increased.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with: the headteacher; the designated leader for safeguarding; the literacy coordinator; and staff responsible for providing additional support to disadvantaged pupils. I met with a member of the governing body. I made a series of visits to lessons, jointly with the headteacher.

I discussed the work of the school with a group of pupils and more pupils informally, during breaktimes and in lessons. I looked at examples of the pupils' work during lessons and at a sample of their workbooks. I looked at the views of parents expressed using Parent View and spoke with others at the start of the school day. I scrutinised various documents, including safeguarding records, a range of policy and other documents, and the school's information about the attendance of the pupils, and their attainment and progress.