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Andrea Lane
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Lane

Short inspection of Warren Hills Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have worked appropriately on the areas identified at the previous inspection. Since your appointment, in August 2015, you have worked in partnership with the new deputy headteacher to raise aspirations. You have improved the systems in place for monitoring the progress of pupils. You have also ensured that more targeted support is given to those pupils who are well behind when joining the school or at risk of falling behind in their studies. You have a close working relationship with a rapidly improving governing body. Governors hold you to account well and regularly visit the school to check how it is doing and to ensure that there is no complacency. However, improvement planning, although detailed, lacks strategic clarity to ensure that governors, senior leaders and teachers can be held fully accountable for school improvement.

Progress in writing, reading and mathematics is good and the current performance of pupils in key stage 2 is in line with national expectations. An effective system has been put in place to support teachers so that they can continue to improve teaching.

The writing and mathematics leaders have a good understanding of how to continue improving their subjects and accelerating pupils' progress. They provide useful feedback to staff following lesson observations, when looking at pupils' books and in discussions with pupils.

In July 2016, the school's key stage 1 writing and the early years results were disappointing. Your response to this has been effective. Pupils join the school significantly below the attainment that is typical for their age and they make increasingly good progress through the Reception Year. Pupils go on to achieve well in key stage 1, most reaching national standards. Pupils who are catching up from very low starting points and have multiple learning needs are well supported through effective interventions. There are high expectations for all pupils to achieve well. You understand this improvement needs to continue.

Most teaching is now characterised by good questioning and subject knowledge and a positive classroom atmosphere. As a result, pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons. A detailed look at pupils' books showed that a large majority are now working at age-related expectations or above. Where pupils are not achieving the higher standards in key stage 1, they are limited in their breadth of knowledge and life's experiences on which to draw upon to meet the higher expectations of the national curriculum. The school is addressing this issue effectively through broadening and expanding the curriculum opportunities for all pupils.

Parents are pleased with the school. I spoke to parents in the playground and looked carefully at the responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents spoke about the welcoming nature of the school and the caring teachers and staff. They talked about the high expectations for behaviour in the school. They said learning was interesting and their children could not wait to get into school. Parents of Reception and Nursery children commented on the inclusive nature of the settings and strong focus on the basic skills, early reading and writing. As a result of this strong emphasis, along with a well-planned learning environment, children make good progress from very low and differing starting points.

Pupils' behaviour is managed well. In class, pupils concentrate well and show considerable pride in their work. Their level of effort is high and the presentation in books is usually good. On occasion, there is inconsistency in the expectations for handwriting, but this is being addressed through regular monitoring and developing the 'pen licence' scheme. The school has responded effectively to the needs of a small proportion of pupils who find it hard to concentrate in class. The nurture group provides effective intervention and alternative provision for these pupils. They progress well and are helped to reintegrate into their own class.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders at all levels have successfully established a strong culture of safeguarding. You and the five other designated leaders for safeguarding have ensured that all staff are fully trained and have a good understanding of what they should do if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Record-keeping is detailed and ensures that leaders are aware of the wider circumstances of each pupil. Leaders take rapid action when they are concerned about a pupil and they work closely with external agencies to take appropriate actions. Regular meetings take place between the key personnel in the school, including the recently appointed inclusion manager, to

review how well vulnerable pupils are doing and if there are any further ways they can be supported. This helps to keep pupils safe.

Pupils feel safe in the school and their parents agree. Discussions with pupils showed that they know they have someone to talk to if they have concerns. They said that teachers care for them. There is a well-planned curriculum to support pupils in knowing how to be safe, which includes understanding the potential dangers of the internet.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remains good, one of my key lines of enquiry was writing. Year 2 national assessment results in 2016 were well below the national average in writing. Detailed analysis of all pupils' work was carried out. Staff identified that, when writing, pupils did not have sufficient vocabulary and experience to write extended pieces of work in different styles. Pupils needed increased opportunities to work independently and for sustained periods of time. Pupils were also found to have significant gaps in their understanding of sentence structure and the ability to write fluently. Many had started from very low starting points. You have set about improving these aspects of teaching and the curriculum. Progress in writing is now good and the standards of pupils' work are broadly in line with age-related expectations. Pupils who are not expected to reach this standard, mostly those with complex special needs, are well supported through tailored interventions and appropriate adaptations to the curriculum.
- My second line of enquiry was about meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, in Reception and key stage 1. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils within each class is higher than average. The progress of children in the Reception class and across key stage 1 has accelerated since September because the use of the pupil premium funding is effective. Strategies to support the least able and those unprepared for school are bearing fruit. The Nursery and Reception classes are developing an effective working relationship. Pupils are making faster progress and a majority are close to achieving national levels of development. This is a significant improvement over recent years. Effective intervention plans are in place to support all pupils in this group and in key stage 1. These plans are rigorously monitored to ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is now close to that of others nationally.
- My third line of enquiry was about the curriculum and its suitability for the pupils attending the school. Pupils in key stage 1 did not achieve greater depth in any subject in 2016. This was because the school did not respond sharply enough to the new curriculum and its higher expectations and was not providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their writing, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Leaders have put in place strategies, such as harnessing expertise from external agents, to improve the curriculum and improve the impact of interventions. This year, the curriculum has been improved and senior and middle leaders are involved in regular monitoring of planning, teaching and assessment. These decisive actions taken by the leadership team mean that the

standard of work has improved and pupils are much better prepared to reach the requirements of the higher expectations.

- Leaders recognise that more work is required to build the confidence of pupils to learn more independently and ensure that the good progress being made is converted into much higher levels of attainment.
- Finally, I looked at attendance. The school is vigilant in monitoring pupils' absence and has been successful, in partnership with local outside agencies, in improving the overall attendance and in reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent. Despite these improvements, the school's attendance remains below average. Leaders understand that further work and constant vigilance is required to ensure that pupils' attendance continues to improve.

Next Steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- plans to raise attainment further in writing are effective
- children in Reception and pupils in key stage 1 continue to develop the confidence and skills to work independently so that a greater proportion is working at greater depth by the end of Year 2
- improvement planning is more precise and strategic and holds all leaders, governors and staff accountable.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Garnham
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher. I also met with some middle leaders, two governors, Year 6 pupils, the Local Authority, Teaching School and parents at the start of the school day. I considered the responses of parents made to Parent View and those of staff and pupils from the electronic questionnaires. We visited nearly all classes in the school, spending a short time in each, and looked at a sample of pupils' work together. I viewed a range of documents. These included the school's own evaluation of its performance and plans for further improvement, including information on how the pupil premium is spent. A number of other policy documents were examined, including those for child protection, safeguarding, the single central record and special educational needs. I

scrutinised safeguarding records, the single central record and child protection files. I looked at the school's website, which complies with Department for Education guidance on what schools should publish.