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Mr Darby  
Headteacher  
Oakwood Junior School  
Holbrook Road  
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Derbyshire  
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Dear Mr Darby

### **Short inspection of Oakwood Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 January 2018, 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 January 2014.

#### **The school continues to be good.**

Since the last inspection, you and the leadership team have adapted well to the changes to the curriculum in September 2015. During this time, you have had a change of mathematics and English subject leaders. You have ensured that the new leaders have a good understanding of their role, and how their actions impact on school improvement. You have accurately identified the areas for development and you and your team have put actions in place to raise standards.

Following the last inspection, you were asked to develop teachers' skills in questioning so that pupils benefit from sharing their ideas with their classmates. During our observations, teachers used effective questioning to develop pupils' understanding. In many cases, teachers' excellent grasp of subject-specific vocabulary and subject knowledge allowed pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding well. Pupils were given effective opportunities to share and discuss ideas as a whole class, in small groups and in pairs.

Staff are keen to strive for improvements and have embraced the recent changes to the teaching of writing and mathematics well. You have encouraged your teachers to develop their own teaching styles, and to use their strengths to support and develop pupils in their classes. You have a friendly and welcoming ethos at the school, where all are encouraged to contribute their ideas and do their best for the pupils. As a result, pupils are confident and make secure progress.

The parents and carers that I spoke with were confident that teachers and leaders

are doing the very best for their children. They felt that you and the staff are approachable and that you deal with any concerns quickly. Some parents spoke highly of the support put in place for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They felt that these pupils are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school, including the extra-curricular activities available to them.

You have established a sporting ethos at the school. Pupils are proud of their full trophy cabinet and their sporting successes, particularly in netball and football. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of being active to stay healthy. They participate in physical exercise at breaktime and lunchtime, as well as joining the many extra-curricular sporting clubs available, including fencing, dance and dodgeball.

Pupils say the curriculum is fun and exciting. They particularly enjoy the topic days and weeks where the whole school learns together. They told me they know all about the different world religions through RE weeks, and have developed their investigation skills during science weeks. Pupils feel well supported by teachers and leaders. One pupil told me that the staff 'always help you, never doubt you and have belief in you'.

The governing body has gone through a recent period of change. The new governors are developing their understanding of the role, and your experienced chair and vice chair are leading the governing body well through this transition. Governors are ambitious for the future of the school. They fully understand the school's areas for development, and provide leaders with challenge.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. The designated safeguarding leads have a comprehensive view of safeguarding at the school. They have an excellent understanding of current safeguarding concerns, and can talk knowledgeably about the needs of pupils and families. Records are well organised and are used carefully by the designated safeguarding leads to monitor any new concerns. The designated leads are unafraid to challenge the local authority when they feel that the support provided has not met pupils' needs. Where cases do not meet the local authority thresholds for support, the designated leaders are hands-on in finding additional support for families through early help assessments, the school nurse or other providers.

Staff are well informed about safeguarding pupils and complete regular safeguarding training. Staff I spoke to, including lunchtime staff and teaching assistants, know how to pass on concerns and what the different types of abuse are. The designated safeguarding leads hold frequent staff meetings to review staff training. This training includes scenarios and case studies to ensure that staff have an up-to-date and comprehensive understanding of different safeguarding issues that pupils may face.

Governors have a good understanding of safeguarding at the school. The safeguarding governor meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss any concerns and also holds termly formal meetings to audit provision.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have made changes to the teaching of mathematics since 2016. Skills are developed systematically and pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves to try increasingly harder problems. Pupils are taught in ability groups, and you and the mathematics leader carefully monitor the progress that pupils make. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics was above the national average.
- Pupils are polite to each other and visitors. They are keen to learn, and participate well in class. Behaviour on the playground and around the school is good, and pupils play well together. You and other leaders are quick to respond to incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are motivated to earn credits and team points for good conduct and working hard.
- You and the senior leadership team are vigilant in following up poor attendance. The school's welfare team has developed good relationships with families, and put support in place when necessary to encourage good attendance at school. As a result, the figures for persistent absence and overall attendance have improved to be in line with the national average.
- You have identified that some of your pupils do not make as much progress as they should in writing. In September 2016, you introduced a new approach to the teaching of writing. This new approach focuses on systematically building pupils' understanding of grammar and applying this to their writing. Teachers who have been using this method since it was introduced demonstrate excellent subject knowledge. This knowledge is used to develop pupils' skills and to challenge them to improve their writing. Some teachers are less confident in the new approach to teaching writing, and do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. You have identified this, are sharing good practice between staff, and are carrying out a programme of professional development and coaching.
- Teachers have a secure understanding of the different needs of the disadvantaged pupils in their class. Funding to support disadvantaged pupils has been used to provide additional reading support as well as specialist teaching from your leader for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, provision has not always focused on meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils. The monitoring of the progress that these pupils make has not been sharp enough and some disadvantaged pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of writing and grammar is further developed to ensure that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
- leaders use assessment information to monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully and ensure that the support provided matches pupils' needs.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I held a meeting with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with two middle leaders, the assistant headteacher, the learning mentor and the school business manager. I met with eight pupils, and I spoke to pupils in class. You and I observed learning taking place during the morning. This included writing and mathematics lessons.

I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, its improvement plan and documents relating to safeguarding.

I considered the views of parents by speaking with some of them before school. I analysed the 25 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also reviewed the responses to the school's parent surveys.