

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Miss Melanie Lawson

Headteacher  
Ladywood Primary School  
Oliver Road  
Kirk Hallam  
Ilkeston  
Derbyshire  
DE7 4NH

Dear Miss Lawson

### **Short inspection of Ladywood Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 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 February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the previous inspection. The passion you feel for the school has created a very positive culture. Staff and governors are committed to doing the best they can so that all pupils can succeed. Yours is an inclusive school which strives to meet the specific learning, social and emotional needs of all pupils. The parents I spoke with were full of praise for the quality of education that their children are receiving. They value the fact that you and other staff make the time to discuss any concerns that they may have. Parents and members of staff commented on the fact that the school feels like a family in which the members take care of each other. As one parent said, 'The lovely thing about this school is that it is a community.' Among other very positive comments, parents described the school as being 'fantastic' and 'amazing'.

During the previous inspection, inspectors identified partnership with parents as an area for development. You have successfully tackled this issue. You now use social media to communicate directly with parents. You have an open door policy and have introduced morning learning sessions for parents. Teachers send postcards home to recognise pupils' good work. Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, showed that the vast majority of parents feel well informed about their children's progress.

Since the last inspection, you have also been successful in improving pupils' use of

grammar, punctuation and spelling in their writing. In 2017, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average. When you and I looked at pupils' work it was clear that pupils now apply their grammatical understanding to improve the quality of their written work.

In response to recommendations in the previous inspection report, you have also reviewed your arrangements for managing teachers' performance. The objectives that you set are now more focused and more easily measurable.

The children I spoke with said how much they like being pupils at Ladywood Primary School. Pupils in key stage 2 find the level of challenge in lessons about right. As one pupil told me, 'When you get stuck, they come and help.' Pupils believe that they are well taught. This view was supported by the parents I spoke with and by parents' responses to the online questionnaire. Pupils also value the enrichment activities that you provide, such as the trip to Edale for pupils in Year 6 and the 'Big Camp Out'.

A particular strength of the school is the work you do for your most vulnerable pupils. They find that learning can, at times, be difficult. Your Maple Tree provision helps to develop these pupils' self-confidence. Initiatives such as your 'Adventurers' and 'Thrive' programmes are also helping to do this. As a result, they gain the social and communication skills that help them to become more effective learners.

Pupils make good progress in key stage 2. The standards that they achieve by the end of key stage 2 are broadly similar to those achieved by pupils nationally. In 2017, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard was above the national average in mathematics and in line with the national average in writing. In reading, it was slightly below average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher standard was above the national average in mathematics but below it in reading and writing.

At the end of key stage 1, pupils made similar progress to their peers nationally in 2017. The standards they reached in reading, writing and mathematics, however, were below those achieved nationally. Teaching does not always provide enough challenge in key stage 1 to allow pupils to make the faster progress they need to catch up.

Governors know the school well and are keen for all pupils to do well. They are fully aware of the strategic role of the governing body. It provides you and other leaders with the right balance of challenge and support. Governors have a broad range of professional expertise, which helps the governing body to carry out its roles effectively. Your own assessment of the school's performance is sound. Your analysis of assessment data is not as rigorous and evaluative as it might be. The current priorities to improve the school are clear and well chosen. As you agreed, however, they do not provide a strategic enough approach to planning in the longer term.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that the arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare are fit for purpose. The school business manager is very thorough in ensuring that all the required vetting of staff and volunteers takes place. Safeguarding policies are up to date and risk assessments are in place for school visits. Staff receive regular safeguarding briefings. Any concerns that the school might have are recorded systematically. Children learn in their lessons and during assemblies about the importance of staying safe. Pupils said that they feel safe at school and that if they had any worries they would know who to speak to. Responses to the online questionnaire indicated that a few parents feel that the school could deal with bullying incidents more effectively. Discussion with parents at the beginning of the school day, however, showed that there is a high level of satisfaction with the way the staff deal with behavioural issues. Overall, parents felt that bullying is not a problem in the school.

## **Inspection findings**

- In the past, pupils made slower progress in reading during key stage 2 than they did in writing and mathematics. Over the last two years you and the other staff have successfully worked to tackle this, and continue to do so. Pupils now have regular opportunities to read in lessons. You have developed the 'reading shed' and introduced the Thursday reading club. These are helping to raise the profile of reading across the school. You have encouraged parents to take 'reading selfies' of themselves and their children reading in unusual places. You have also helped pupils to become members of the local library. These strategies are all generating an interest in reading and pupils now show a greater enjoyment of reading. You have also developed a consistent approach to the teaching of reading throughout the school. We saw this to good effect in reading lessons, when pupils enjoyed the challenge of reading a difficult text by drawing on a range of reading strategies.
- Leaders have correctly identified the progress made by disadvantaged pupils as an area for development. This is because the standards they achieve by the end of key stages 1 and 2 have varied and typically have been lower than those achieved by other pupils nationally. You are now tracking the progress of disadvantaged pupils much more closely. In Year 6, we saw how you have used pupil premium funding to increase staffing. The smaller groups this creates have helped pupils make faster progress. During our analysis of pupils' work, we agreed that there was no discernible difference between the progress being made by disadvantaged pupils and by other pupils. The work in all books was of a similarly good standard, in both English and mathematics. Teachers give precise feedback to pupils to help them improve their work. Pupils respond well, helping to accelerate their progress. A review of the school's assessment data showed clearly that, as pupils move through the school, the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils is reducing.
- Over the last two years there has been a decline in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. You attributed this decline to the high proportion of pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities who took the test. In the phonics lessons that we observed, teachers and teaching assistants made the learning interesting and fun. As a result, the pupils were very engaged and applied their phonic awareness, both reading and writing words correctly. More generally, teachers in key stage 1 do not plan activities that challenge pupils enough. This means they are not making the good progress found in key stage 2. Not enough pupils achieve the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers increase the level of challenge for pupils in key stage 1 so that a greater proportion of them achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the key stage
- they evaluate the school's performance more rigorously and use the information to create strategic, longer-term plans for improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Drabble  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, with the school's business manager and with members of the governing body, including the chair. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I met with a number of middle leaders and with three other members of staff. I also spoke with a group of children and heard two children read. I made a tour of the school, observed teaching in two classes and undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plan and documents relating to safeguarding. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and took account of their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey of parents.