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Mrs Emma Estell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Estell

Short inspection of Westdale Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up your position as headteacher in January 2016, you have strengthened the leadership team. Leaders collaborate effectively, with mutual support being a key part of the team's success. In the last two years, you and other leaders have reviewed all aspects of the school. Leaders' most recent evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development is realistic and based on secure evidence. Leaders have identified key strategies to bring about improvements and they modify these if they are not successful. As a result of leaders' actions, pupils' achievement has improved over time.

You and the other leaders have high expectations and challenge staff and pupils to do their best. Staff feel respected and supported. They value the opportunities they have to improve their own professional practice. They welcome taking responsibility for leading an area of the curriculum. Staff are proud to work at the school. A majority of staff and parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys agreed that the school is well led. Parents I spoke with said staff are approachable. Parents and carers appreciate being able to share any concerns about their children with teachers. All of these parents confirmed that their children are happy at the school and are making good progress.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and they feel valued. You and the other staff encourage an inclusive culture in which pupils celebrate their differences and learning is risk free. For example, I watched pupils during assembly singing

enthusiastically about being 'proud of our school, though all of us are different'. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and the school environment is calm and orderly. An overwhelming majority of staff and parents said that pupils' behaviour is good and managed well. Pupils know how to get on with others. They understand how to behave, both in class and during social times. Pupils said that they are sometimes distracted from their learning by other pupils. During lessons that I observed, pupils responded quickly to requests from adults without any distraction. They worked well together, supporting each other in their learning and helping each other to make progress.

The parents I spoke with and those who responded to Ofsted's survey are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They would recommend the school to others. Each morning, teachers welcome parents into the school to see how their children are making progress with their reading and writing. One parent commented that their child is 'enthused every day about what she has been doing at school'. Another noted that their child is 'making great strides in achievement and personal confidence'. Your partnership with parents ensures that the majority of pupils attend school regularly. Fewer pupils are frequently absent compared with the national average.

Governors are ambitious and committed to the school. They support leaders in bringing about further improvements. Meetings of the governing body focus on the school's key priorities and how their work is holding leaders to account. Governors, for example, ask questions about pupils' attainment, progress and attendance. Some governors have only recently joined the governing body. They are receiving training to ensure that they can carry out their roles successfully.

At the last inspection, inspectors asked leaders to make sure that adults' questions and suggestions in the outdoor area promote children's learning better in the Reception Year. Leaders have developed the outdoor area. Children move between indoor and outdoor learning activities that involve both teacher-led and child-selected play. Relationships between children and adults are strong and supportive. Teaching assistants ask children questions to move their learning on. Teachers challenge the children to explain their answers, for example about the phonetic spelling of a word. Children's attainment in the early years has improved over time, although results were just below the national average in 2017. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check was equal to the national average in 2017. Current children's progress in the Reception Year is strong. They are on track to achieve more highly than children in 2017, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Inspectors also asked leaders to ensure that teachers move the learning of the most able pupils on to the next steps as soon as they are ready. In 2017, an increased proportion of pupils in Year 2 achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics compared with results in 2016. This was particularly the case for the most able pupils and pupils of average ability. Teachers have high expectations and pupils enjoy it when teachers challenge them. As one pupil said, 'Teachers love mistakes because you are learning.' Pupils explained that they use 'learning powers'

such as 'Professor Reflective' when they get stuck. This builds their resilience and helps them to 'climb out of the learning pit', as they put it. These strategies were being used to good effect in a digital literacy lesson in Year 2.

Pupils' workbooks show that teachers are encouraging the most able pupils to achieve more highly in mathematics. In writing, however, teachers are not always challenging the most able pupils sufficiently. Leaders have identified writing as a priority in the school's improvement plan. The actions they are taking are having an impact. Currently, pupils in all years are on track to achieve at least as well as pupils in 2017 at the expected standard in writing. An increased proportion of pupils are set to achieve at the higher standard. You agree, however, that sustaining these improvements remains a priority, particularly for the most able pupils.

Leaders have introduced a tracking system for the small number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Teachers check these pupils' progress closely. They now set them weekly targets that identify small steps of progress. All pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive one-to-one support with their learning. The changes made mean that these pupils are making progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They have not been in place long enough, however, to generate the faster progress that is needed.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the rest of the leadership team ensure that there is a culture of safeguarding at the school. All the pupils who I spoke with said that they feel safe in school. Pupils know how to stay safe, including when they are online. Pupils spoke confidently about a range of different safeguarding issues, including 'stranger danger', road safety and the correct use of medicines. They understand what bullying is and they know that teachers resolve it effectively if it takes place. All staff and a majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's surveys agree that this is the case. Pupils know who they can talk to in school if they have any concerns.

Leaders carry out the necessary checks on adults before they are able to start work or volunteer at the school. Staff are aware of their safeguarding duties. They receive training and frequent updates, including about radicalisation and extremism. Governors also take part in training, although new governors have not yet completed all aspects. Leaders ensure that pupils' safeguarding records are accurate and up to date. They request external support for pupils when needed. School leaders and governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously and arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- In 2017, an increased proportion of pupils attained the higher standard in mathematics at the end of Year 2 compared with 2016. The proportions of girls who achieved the expected and the higher standards, however, were lower than those for boys. Leaders have introduced new approaches to teaching mathematics. Teachers now provide pupils with opportunities to practise their

problem-solving and reasoning skills. Pupils choose 'star challenges' at different levels of difficulty. Many pupils select the most difficult level. Leaders predict that increased proportions of pupils in the current Year 2 will achieve the expected and higher standards compared with 2017. Girls currently in Years 1 and 2 are achieving at a higher level than boys. Standards in mathematics are improving.

- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their peers. They do not make consistently good progress from the Reception Year through to the end of Year 2. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been below the national average for the last three years. In 2016, no disadvantaged pupil in Year 2 achieved the higher standard in any subject. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 made slower progress in writing and mathematics than they had in previous years. Although the proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is small, it is rising. Leaders have included raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils as a priority on the school's improvement plan.
- Leaders have identified a range of interventions to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. For example, a teaching assistant works closely with each disadvantaged pupil to support their learning. Disadvantaged pupils' current work shows that they are making progress. In Years 1 and 2, however, these pupils are not making enough progress to catch up with other pupils. Disadvantaged pupils do not attend as frequently as other pupils and this also affects their learning. The school's pupil premium strategy does not include specific costings and success criteria for each intervention. The governing body, therefore, is not able to check how successful these have been and hold leaders to account for the monies spent. Disadvantaged pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Leaders provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. Half-termly topics are woven throughout all subjects. In their mathematics workbooks, pupils in Year 1 used a 'dinosaur planet' theme to practise their measuring skills. Pupils in Year 2 told me about the Titanic from their 'sailing the seven seas' topic. Pupils experience a rich musical diet. They also take part in a range of sporting activities. One parent commented that children love coming to school because 'they do lots of wonderful, fun and creative activities'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils care about others and are considerate and respectful. Leaders aim to broaden pupils' horizons, for example by celebrating Diwali and taking pupils to visit a local synagogue. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, for example as a member of the school parliament or as a representative on the eco team. These opportunities help them to develop their debating and decision-making skills. They contribute to pupils' 'passport for life'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently challenge the most able pupils, particularly with their

writing, to increase the proportion of pupils who achieve at the higher standard by the end of key stage 1

- they allocate pupil premium funding specifically and evaluate its impact precisely to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress from Reception through to Year 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Rachel Tordoff
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, who is responsible for the early years, numeracy and the pupil premium funding. I held a meeting with the leader of literacy and the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. I also met with six governors and spoke with the chair of the governing body on the telephone.

I visited five classes jointly with you, across all year groups, to observe pupils' learning. I also visited the morning assembly. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons. I spoke with a group of pupils in Year 2, as well as speaking with other pupils informally. I also listened to pupils read. I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks with you and the deputy headteacher.

I met a number of parents informally at the beginning of the school day. I took into account the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 20 free-text comments. I also considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

I evaluated a range of information, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's use of pupil premium funding and information relating to pupils' attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour, as well as a selection of school policies.