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Miss Claire Forrest  
Headteacher  
Nelson Junior and Infant School  
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Dear Miss Forrest

### **Short inspection of Nelson Junior and Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2019, 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 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your calm, caring and attentive leadership has ensured that teaching continues to be effective. You have established an effective team of leaders and staff who, in turn, support you well. Together, you have created a climate for learning in which pupils are nurtured and supported to achieve at school.

You, your leadership team and the governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education in the school and areas for development. This enables you to build on the school's strengths and you have done so. Since the previous inspection, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have risen and you have made other improvements. The early years classrooms, for example, have been developed into wonderfully stimulating and well-resourced areas, indoors and outside. Here, provision has been carefully shaped to support children's early literacy and communication. Furthermore, your team continually adapt what they do in order to meet the changing needs that present themselves with each new group of children. You have also improved the level of challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils' reading, which is often underdeveloped at key stage 1, pushes ahead strongly in key stage 2 as pupils build securely on the solid foundations laid in the early part of the school. Looking to the future, making sure even more pupils become competent and keen readers is a school improvement priority.

Most parents who spoke with me or who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, indicated that they are pleased with the school. They also reported that teachers keep things fresh and interesting for pupils. Parents value regular workshops, which help them to support their children and understand what they are learning about in school.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and attend school regularly. They behave well and feel safe and secure in school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's safeguarding procedures and routines are excellent. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Everyone on the staff is alert to pupils' needs and any warning signs that they may need help. In addition, a specialist and well-trained team of staff keeps a close watch on attendance, local risks and family matters. This team liaises with other organisations and responds quickly to concerns.

Allegations of bullying are taken seriously and staff follow up any problems promptly and thoroughly. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations and know what to do if they are worried about something. They say they feel safe in school.

Employment checks on staff are made and kept correctly, and pupils' records are kept up to date.

### **Inspection findings**

- Many children start school with a level of knowledge and skill below that typically expected for their age. Many have little knowledge of English or speak English as an additional language. In response to this, the school's early years team works hard to build constructive relationships with families. During their first week in school, for instance, staff visit all parents in their homes. Parents are invited to attend school-led workshops and receive information about how to support their children's learning at home. In addition to termly parents' evenings, staff meet with different parents each week to keep in touch. Staff also hold workshops for parents about school life and ways to support their children's learning at home.
- The school employs a specialist teacher who assesses newly arrived children when they first start school. Following on from this, staff organise lessons, support, resources and training in order to meet children's different needs. Classrooms are well resourced and set-up to provide many opportunities for purposeful play, language and learning. The school's organised and supportive systems mean that children who start school with little knowledge of English begin to pick it up quickly. Consequently, they benefit from the effective teaching provided. Their spoken language develops at an impressive rate and they acquire positive attitudes towards school and learning. However, while their spoken language speeds ahead, their reading skills are often slower to progress due to pupils still developing competence in the English language.

- Because of this, the school prioritises the teaching of reading and has recently strengthened the teaching of phonics in the Nursery class. Throughout the early years and key stage 1, phonics lessons take place every day. In lessons, routines are clearly evident and teachers make sure there is plenty of brisk, purposeful repetition of letter sounds. New learning builds carefully on earlier learning and meaningful resources are readily to hand. Good communication and record-keeping ensure that children's learning journey across the early years and into key stage 1 goes smoothly. As their reading skills improve, staff make sure children use what they know to develop their learning in other subject areas.
- Overall, phonics teaching and the teaching of early reading are done well. However, at this school, many pupils come and go at different times in the school year, often at short notice, with many new pupils having little spoken English or experience of the British schooling system. This high mobility clearly has an effect on the school's Year 1 phonics results, which have bobbed up and down over time. That said, school records show that those who have been at the school the longest get the highest scores. Similarly, reading attainment in key stage 1 is also affected by high mobility and new pupils' limited knowledge of English.
- The teaching of reading across Years 1 and 2 is effective and there is a very positive reading culture in the school. Authors visit the school, pupils visit Birmingham library and staff regularly read to pupils and introduce them to new books. In addition, rewards and competitions encourage pupils to read at home. The school runs after-school reading clubs and provides parents with lots of information about how they can help their children at home. Reading results at the end of Year 2, while below average, are edging upwards but, currently, are behind the standards reached in mathematics. In the main, this is because key stage 1 pupils are still finding their way with their reading comprehension skills.
- In key stage 2, pupils' reading starts to take off. Key stage 2 teaching builds constructively on the solid foundations laid in earlier year groups and enables all pupils to do well. In fact, standards at the end of Year 6 have risen over time. In 2018, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics were all above average, with disadvantaged pupils doing better than other pupils. These commendable outcomes are clearly a reflection of the effective teaching in the school, leaders' ambition for all pupils to succeed, and wise use of the pupil premium.
- Governors and senior leaders use pupil premium effectively to employ extra teachers. They also use it to provide a wide range of speaking and listening activities in school. Among other things, this gives pupils the tools they need to express themselves, to engage productively with others and to find things out. Another initiative, called 'peer massage', helps pupils to be calm, thoughtful and happy in school. Every day, pupils in all classes take part in this national accredited scheme, which aims to make sure pupils have positive and nurturing experiences at school. Pupils evidently enjoy and benefit from this daily relaxing activity and it supports other aspects of the school's work to promote pupils' well-being and mental health. Consequently, pupils feel good about themselves and their achievements. This motivates them to pay attention in lessons, work hard and help others.

- During this inspection, pupils' growing ability, as they move up through the school, to do well in many different subjects was apparent. In no small part, this is due to the school's increasingly effective work to teach pupils to read well, which gives them a master key to learning across the curriculum. Having said this, while many pupils develop into competent readers, they do not necessarily read widely, and for enjoyment, beyond school. Building reading stamina and promoting a love of reading is rightly an ongoing school improvement priority at the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they build further on the school's effective work to:

- motivate pupils to read more widely and regularly
- support those pupils who find early reading difficult.

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

Yours sincerely

Diane Pye  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and members of your staff team. I also met with two governors and spoke with an external educational adviser. I carried out short observations of teaching and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

By the end of the inspection, there were 45 recent responses on Parent View and six free-text responses. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires.

I looked at several documents, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, attendance and behaviour records, assessment information, pupil premium plans, several school policy documents and internal analysis of different aspects of the school's work. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I asked staff, pupils and parents about safeguarding matters.