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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 July 2019

Mrs K Mirams
Executive Headteacher
Westlands Primary School
Homewood Avenue
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME10 1XN

Dear Mrs Mirams

Short inspection of Westlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 school was judged to be good in May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior leaders work cohesively and are well respected by staff, pupils and most parents. One parent said, 'Leaders make sure our children learn to do their best at everything in this school.'

Leaders and governors share your drive and commitment to ensure that pupils experience a broad and balanced education that allows them to develop as well-rounded young people. All staff place importance on pupils' well-being as much as their academic success. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time they leave Year 6.

The school is a friendly and welcoming place. The school's values of kindness, learning and responsibility shine in all areas of the school's work. Warm and courteous relationships between pupils and staff help to promote good standards and enjoyment in learning. Pupils are known and cared for as individuals. The atmosphere created by you, your staff and governors is conducive to learning. Classrooms are bright and attractive, and pupils' work proudly displayed. Pupils say that teachers plan interesting work and that they are very enthusiastic about all that the school has to offer.

Leaders keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and provide guidance to teachers if required. This support, combined with the sharing of good practice, results in effective teaching and learning across the school. Classrooms are hives of activity where pupils are engaged in well-planned learning tasks, discussing their

ideas with others and deepening their understanding. Teachers use resources well to enthuse and support learning. For example, in Year 1 pupils excitedly used a range of resources to partition numbers and apply addition and subtraction calculations with increasing fluency.

Pupils are happy to come to school and describe it as 'fantastic' and one where, 'everyone makes sure we are safe and happy'. They are clearly proud of their school and enjoy the range of experiences that staff provide. Staff, parents and carers are very enthusiastic about all aspects of the school's work. One parent said, 'This is a great school and one where staff always want the best for our children.'

You and your team have successfully addressed the areas highlighted for improvement in the previous inspection. Teaching in mathematics is a strength. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to discuss and explain what they have understood about the concepts taught. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers provide pupils with time to review and edit their work. Leaders have introduced feedback strategies, of which pupils say, 'It makes us think more carefully about our work and take responsibility for our learning.'

Leaders understand the many strong attributes of Westlands Primary School but also know that there are still areas to develop further. You have identified that outcomes for the most able pupils in writing at greater depth across all year groups need to improve further. We also agreed that the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent needs to reduce so that attendance for all groups is in line with with or better than the national average for primary schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. The care and attention given to all pupils reflects this. Staff place the highest priority on pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders ensure that all staff are thoroughly trained to support the pupils in their care. Well-considered training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. They are vigilant about potential risks. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. The safeguarding governor has attended appropriate training. He visits the school and meets regularly with the designated safeguarding officer. This provides oversight and scrutiny of relevant processes.

Pupils said that they feel safe and know who to go to if they have a concern, and how to keep themselves safe when using the computer. They know that bullying is, 'being teased repeatedly', and that if they are worried or disagree with their friends they can talk to staff who, will do everything to help resolve and deal with their concerns. Pupils told me that behaviour is mainly good. However, at times some pupils disrupt learning and affect playtimes.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to consider the actions you have taken to ensure that pupils make good progress in writing. You identified this as an area for improvement both this year and in the last school year. I worked with the head of school and subject leader for writing and could see that there are now detailed plans in place that identify the sequence of learning needed to ensure that pupils' new learning builds on what they have learned before. When we looked in pupils' books, we could see that teachers ensure that pupils understand the small steps needed to write successfully for a particular purpose. Pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their own work before a teacher gives feedback on it. In lessons, we could see that teachers pay explicit attention to widening pupils' vocabulary, which is improving the quality of their writing. Current progress and evidence from work in pupils' books show that higher proportions of pupils than previously are on track to achieve above average outcomes at the expected and greater depth standards at the end of key stage 2. However, during the inspection, we agreed that the most able pupils do not always have the opportunities across all year groups to apply their ideas creatively and with increasing independence.
- Our second line of enquiry focused on attendance. Your procedures for managing and analysing pupils' absence are well organised. School staff are quick to call parents and carers when a pupil does not turn up. They make home visits where necessary. It is clear that the school is sensitive to the needs of pupils who are unwell and have medical appointments. These account for the majority of absences. The school has put strategies in place to work with pupils and families. Leaders have raised awareness of the importance of good attendance, for example through the termly attendance raffle. Where necessary, you take legal action to ensure that parents send their children to school regularly. Your strict adherence to these procedures has resulted in improved attendance rates across the school. However, a few pupils continue to miss too much school. Persistent absence is still relatively high. Your actions have led to some improvements and leaders are determined to reduce persistent absence rates even further.
- Finally, we wanted to explore how well the pupil premium funding is used. In 2018, disadvantaged pupils' combined attainment was below the national average at the expected and greater depth standard by the end of key stage 2. Leaders monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils very closely and carry out regular checks on how this group of pupils are getting on with their work. The inclusion leader ensures that interventions are provided for any disadvantaged pupil at risk of falling behind. Bespoke support is provided to enable pupils to access the curriculum successfully and confidently. In addition, through your monitoring and review systems, you have ensured that disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The school's assessment information shows that overall, disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress throughout the school and that there are no wide differences between the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in every group.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide the most able pupils with opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding in writing more creatively
- the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent reduces so that attendance rates are in line with or better than the national average for primary schools.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the Swales Academies Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Shazia Akram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you to agree the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I also met with other members of the school staff, including your heads of school, deputy headteacher, pupil premium leader, subject leaders and teachers. I met with two trust leaders, the chair of the governing body and members of the local governing body. I had conversations with parents at the start of the day. I visited classrooms, accompanied by you and the heads of school. I spoke to a wide range of pupils and staff and, together with leaders, looked at pupils' work and other evidence to evaluate pupils' progress over time. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement, safeguarding records, pupils' progress information, and behaviour and attendance information. I considered 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 26 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I also considered written responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text facility.