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Mrs Joanna Wasyliw
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Dear Mrs Wasyliw

Short inspection of St John's Primary School In Rishworth

Following my visit to the school on 13 February 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. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since your appointment, at the time of the last inspection, you have created a leadership team which is extremely strong. Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the strengths and priorities for improvement to ensure the further development of the school. This is evident in the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness and the school development plan. Consequently, pupils' outcomes have improved strongly, and they achieve well.

You have established a happy and caring school where pupils and staff thrive. This is underpinned by the strong Christian values of 'SHINE' (Success, Honesty, Independence, Neighbourliness and Enjoyment). These core values were evident when we watched pupils and the adults in school working and learning together.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Middle leaders accurately evaluate their subjects and are clear about their next steps in order to further improve pupils' outcomes. The strengths identified in pupils' behaviour found at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils are kind

and respectful of each other and are proud of the different responsibilities they can have in school. For example, the buddy system between Year 6 and Reception pupils is very much valued by both pupils and parents alike.

Pupils and parents and carers who made their views known are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent said, 'My children are thriving at this school and enjoy every day.' This comment was typical of most parents who said how approachable staff are and how they 'cherished' their children. Parents value not only the academic progress made by their children, but also their social and emotional development fostered by the school.

Pupils' progress is typically strong in all key stages. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been above the national average for four years. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average for the last two years. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has been above the national average for two years. The proportion reaching the higher standard in Year 6 has been above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for two years. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics has been well above average over the last three years.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They are meticulous in their record-keeping and procedures. Staff record any vulnerability concerns centrally. Leaders then use this information to seek advice. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils' safety is paramount and their attendance levels are high. Pupils who made their views known say that they feel safe and they learn about all aspects of safety. For example, road safety, how to stay safe online and through paramedics demonstrating first aid techniques during the annual safety week. Parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, show that parents believe that their children feel safe and happy at your school. All staff and governors have received and read up-to-date documentation about safeguarding and child protection, so that they can protect pupils from harm.

Inspection findings

- In recent years, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has been less than in reading and mathematics. Over time, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing has also been less strong than in reading and mathematics. Therefore, I wanted to check what leaders are doing to improve writing standards.
- Leaders and governors acknowledge that Year 2 and Year 6 writing results in 2016 took a dip. Since then, writing outcomes have improved, with pupils now achieving well and their progress is improving strongly. There are few pupils who

are disadvantaged; however, governors ensure that additional funding is well spent. When we looked together at the Year 6 books we saw that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress.

- Pupils told me they have a love for writing and this is evident from our observations in every class. Their written work is well sequenced and interwoven within reading, grammar, spelling and the wider curriculum. Consequently, pupils have a wide range of opportunities to write. Teachers provide prompts and scaffolds so that pupils have high expectations in writing. As a result, pupils in Year 2 were confidently using words like abdicate when fact finding about the Queen. Also, in a Year 6 lesson, we saw pupils keen to redraft their work to cover a range of emotions such as sympathy and comedy. They enjoyed the chance to develop their own ideas as writers.
- At the last inspection, leaders and governors were asked to make better use of assessment information in early years to identify any gaps in learning. Children join the school typically from eight different settings. Your early years teacher visits each setting and when children start in Reception they have individual assessments to help shape their learning needs. Children start school with skills typical for their age, although there are a group of children each year whose starting points are lower, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy.
- The early years teacher and leader value the training that has been available since the last inspection. As a result, new approaches to improve indoor and outdoor learning are in place. Much of this training in developing children's skills takes time and you acknowledge that this work now needs embedding. Leaders have an accurate view of children's assessments. When we looked together, with the early years team, at the evidence from a range of children, we saw that they are now making accelerated progress from their different starting points.
- During our visit to early years, we found children to be confident and they made appropriate use of indoor and outdoor learning spaces. We saw children who were keen to write and read back their work. They make effective use of their phonics knowledge, resulting in improving reading fluency. Children, for example, have a good knowledge of the book 'Zog', with some writing mini book reviews and others creating castles in the sand area. Teachers and additional adults in the early years know the children well; however, the quality of their questioning is not always consistently effective to find out what the children already know. Therefore, there are some occasions where children's next steps are not as quickly identified.
- Since your appointment, the leadership team has been strengthened. Subject leaders are now in place and know their subjects well. They are passionate about ensuring that pupils achieve the highest standards, with the school achieving a variety of subject quality marks. Governors are not afraid to challenge senior leaders and subject leaders so that the pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. They are careful to appoint new governors based on skills audits, so there is expertise within the governing body to continually improve the school. Teachers act on monitoring and feedback and they told me that training opportunities have developed their teaching as well as their subject leadership. Consequently, pupils' outcomes have improved strongly at each key stage and

leaders ensure that improvements have been maintained across reading, writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in early years, teachers and additional adults probe children's thinking more through effective questioning
- they embed further improvements in developing children's skills in early years to sustain the progress made this year.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Clennan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work, alongside both you and your assistant headteacher. I met with you and senior leaders. I met with five governors. I also spoke on the telephone to a representative of the diocese and your school improvement partner. I spoke with eight pupils in a discussion group and with pupils informally in lessons and around the school. I also listened to several pupils read.

I evaluated the 57 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and met with a group of parents. I also took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 35 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness; the school's development plans; and safeguarding documentation. I also considered information posted on the school's website.