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Mrs Ashley Best-White
Executive Headteacher
White Woman Lane Junior School
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Dear Mrs Best-White

Short inspection of White Woman Lane Junior 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 January 2014.

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 certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection. The school provides a highly positive, warm and vibrant atmosphere within which pupils are valued as individuals. They thrive as a result, both in relation to their personal development and their academic achievement. The curriculum provides an extensive range of rich opportunities for learning and for pupils to express their creativity and develop their imaginations. It is tailored exceptionally well to pupils' differing needs and starting points. Consequently, pupils love learning and this is reflected in high levels of attendance for all groups. Pupils develop into well-rounded individuals who are mature and reflective. They have the critical thinking skills to respond to challenging questions and problems in subjects across the curriculum.

As the executive headteacher, you provide exceptional leadership that is visionary and bold. A highly skilled leadership team supports you and the work of the school very effectively. Staff are with you on your journey towards excellence, and they follow your lead in taking courageous steps to implement innovative practices.

Leaders across the school have an in-depth understanding of how good the school is.

You have ensured that the school has continued to improve since the last inspection. Pupils are now encouraged to take their learning to a more challenging level through regular opportunities for problem-solving and investigative activities. This was an area for improvement when the school was inspected last time. In addition, pupils are now learning from their mistakes to ensure that they do not repeat these, unlike at the time of the previous inspection. Indeed, pupils are learning that making mistakes is an opportunity to improve their learning and they are not afraid to get things wrong. The school's performance has been improving with strong results in both 2015 and 2016 at the end of key stage 2. Although results were lower in 2017, they remained good particularly in reading. Pupils currently in the school are demonstrating strong achievement. You acknowledge that even more can be done to ensure that all make the best progress they are capable of.

Since the last inspection, you have widened the partnership you have had over many years with another local junior school to include a further four local primary schools. This new partnership has strengthened the school's ability to provide wider training and development opportunities for staff, use resources more cost-effectively and strengthen leadership. You, as the executive headteacher of the whole partnership, work with your executive leadership team to ensure that White Woman Lane Junior School benefits from the partnership as well as making a strong contribution to it.

Governors are very thorough in how they examine the school's performance and they do not hold back from asking difficult and challenging questions of leaders. They have, for example, questioned leaders about the lower results achieved at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 compared with the high level of performance in the preceding two to three years. Governors provide significant support and oversight for the future development of the school. They have played a key part in the transformation to the larger partnership of local primary schools.

Most parents are very positive about the school and this is reflected in highly positive comments such as: 'Here is a school that absolutely 100% knows its children and families. There is a lovely feel about the place that is immediately evident on stepping inside', and 'I particularly like the school values and the confidence they instil into the children to push them to their full potential.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff have been trained well and they know what to look for to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They are very vigilant when it comes to pupils' safety and know pupils and families well. Consequently, any changes in an individual pupil's behaviour or demeanour are picked up quickly and followed up. Pupils feel very safe at school and their parents agree that they are kept safe.

Checks on adults visiting the school or wanting to work there are thorough to make sure that all are safe to work with children. Records of recruitment and background checks of staff, including supply staff, contracted-in staff and governors, are maintained to a high standard. Records kept on pupils for whom any safeguarding concerns have been expressed are of an equally high standard and allow staff to track the work that is being done to keep them safe, including work with external agencies.

You invest a great deal in supporting the emotional and social needs of pupils, including promoting good mental health for all. This supports pupils to become well-adjusted youngsters who can talk about their feelings and be empathetic towards others.

The school has worked closely with parents and pupils to ensure that they develop a strong understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- We looked together at the results from last year, because these were not as strong as those of the preceding two years. From our discussions and the evidence in the school, it is clear that the lower performance is not a sign of decline in the standards of education. This remains strong.
- A number of factors led to pupils making less progress. This included some mobility among pupils. In addition, this year group had a high proportion of pupils born in the summer and, therefore, more pupils who were at an earlier developmental stage by the time they took their national curriculum tests than has been the case in other years. The current performance in Year 6 indicates that most pupils are making significant progress in writing and mathematics as well as reading.
- Past performance in national curriculum tests at the end of key stage 2 shows that the most able pupils perform well in reading and mathematics. Their performance in writing has not been quite as strong in the last couple of years. In addition, slightly fewer middle-attaining pupils last year made the rapid progress needed to achieve a high standard compared with middle attainers nationally in mathematics in 2017.
- Information and evidence in the school shows that you and your staff have very high expectations. Therefore, you expect not only the most able to achieve the higher standard by the end of key stage 2 but also encourage, support and extend others who have the potential for high levels of achievement. Visits to lessons and examination of books show that pupils are given challenging work which they relish. Skilful assessment of pupils' ongoing work ensures that teachers move pupils on to their next stage of development as soon as they are ready. This helps to accelerate the pace of learning. Only very occasionally do some pupils, who are particularly able in mathematics, find the work a little easy.
- The school makes highly effective use of the pupil premium funding to support the achievement and wider development of disadvantaged pupils. The support is

tailored carefully around individual needs and checked regularly to see how well it is working. The school is swift to change or adjust its approach, or the nature of the support it is providing, based on careful evaluation of the impact that it is having.

- The school is very well focused on providing enriching experiences for disadvantaged pupils and promoting work which helps to deepen their understanding of language. As a result, disadvantaged pupils grow in confidence and their learning flourishes. They make very effective progress from their starting points. While there are still some differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally, these do diminish over the key stage and, in relation to their starting points, disadvantaged pupils perform very well, particularly in reading. The most able disadvantaged pupils are achieving the high levels of which they are capable. They produce high-quality writing, for example, and explain difficult ideas in mathematics very competently.
- You are keen for disadvantaged pupils to do even better. Your thorough self-evaluation identifies that the work the school is doing to support pupils' language should continue in order to further improve their writing. This is because some disadvantaged pupils do not use as varied or rich a vocabulary when writing as other pupils. A recent new initiative, which helps to promote language for thinking in English, is having a very positive impact on the use of language and writing for disadvantaged pupils as well as others.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has developed its curriculum so that it is 'enquiry based'. This means that pupils have daily opportunities to learn through the exploration of ideas and questions which promote deeper thinking, investigation, problem-solving and critical evaluation. The school has established this curriculum very successfully across the school so that pupils in all classes have rich learning experiences. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are benefiting from learning through enquiry. It provides significant opportunities for not just the most able but also others to develop learning in depth.
- The enquiry-based approach is also evident in the way teachers teach English and mathematics. In mathematics, pupils tackle challenging problems and are skilled in explaining how they work these out. Pupils' written work across different subjects is purposeful as a result of the enquiry-based approach to learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- very able mathematicians are challenged even more
- disadvantaged pupils continue to improve their vocabulary so that they can make even more rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, two of the three deputy executive headteachers, the two heads of school, other school leaders, three governors, including the chair of the governing body, the chair of the curriculum committee and the governor leading on the pupil premium funding, a representative of the local authority and pupils. We visited classrooms together and looked at pupils' work in their books. I examined a range of documents, policies and assessment information. I took account of the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, from 21 parents, as well as 16 written responses from parents. In addition, I considered four staff responses and 12 pupil responses to Ofsted surveys.