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Mr Chris Johnson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Johnson

Short inspection of West End Academy

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 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 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 team are determined to continue to improve even further, by building on the school's many strengths and by addressing the areas for improvement that you have identified through thorough self-evaluation. For example, at the beginning of the year, you identified priorities for improvement and the whole school team has worked together to systematically address them.

Leaders have taken appropriate actions to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers ensure that time is used to the full in lessons to advance pupils' learning. Well-established routines help to make sure that learning begins as soon as pupils enter their classrooms. Lessons are planned with increasingly challenging tasks. Pupils say, 'We have never finished because there is always something to move on to.'

Leaders were also asked to make sure that pupils are always fully equipped with the precise knowledge and skills they need to tackle their work independently and confidently. Pupils are now confident learners who expect their work to be challenging. They work with varying degrees of independence. They say that their teachers give the support and encouragement they need to continue to improve in all subjects.

The school is very calm and orderly. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. They work hard and are keen to do well. Most are resilient and persevere with challenging tasks. Pupils of all ages cooperate well to share resources and to complete collaborative tasks. Their conduct is exemplary and they are friendly and polite.

Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the opportunities that school life offers. They enjoy a wide range of subjects and say that visitors and educational visits enhance their work by 'bringing learning to life'. Many enjoy the wide range of sporting opportunities and after-school clubs. Pupils are encouraged to take on a range of additional responsibilities, and some explained how they support others by being part of the 'Top Team'.

Most parents and carers speak positively about the school. They say that their children are well taught, are making good progress and are given appropriate homework.

Staff say that leaders provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. They have many opportunities for professional development and could give examples of how it has improved their teaching. They especially value the opportunities they have to support each other and to visit other schools.

Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths. They could also explain how areas for development are being addressed through the actions identified in the school development plan. They could give examples of how they hold leaders to account for their actions by asking challenging questions in meetings and when visiting school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Staff are well trained and receive regular updates. They understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Although incidents are rare, records show that appropriate actions are taken when necessary. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are confident that there are trusted adults in school to go to if they ever have any worries, and say that the small amount of poor behaviour or bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils understand the importance of reporting any form of abuse. They know how to react if someone tries to persuade them to do something they know is wrong. Their understanding of how to stay safe online is very well developed.

Most parents who made their views known said that their children are happy and safe in school.

Inspection findings

- Phonics teaching has become increasingly effective in equipping pupils with the skills they need to be able to succeed in the early stages of learning to read. Teachers carefully check that pupils understand the words they are learning to read. Explanations are clear, and questioning is used effectively to provide both support and challenge. Books are generally well matched to phonics knowledge. Pupils have lots of opportunities to practise their developing skills. They regularly read to adults, to reading buddies and to each other. Most pupils who are in danger of falling behind are given effective support to help them to keep up. Support is given to those who do not reach the required standard in phonics, to help them to become successful readers.
- Pupils are developing a love of reading. Teachers regularly read stories, poems and non-fiction texts to their classes. Books in classrooms are carefully chosen to engage interest. Some pupils who act as librarians were keen to explain their role in recommending books.
- A lot of effective work has been done to improve the consistency in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers give clear explanations. Misconceptions are usually identified quickly and addressed. Pupils of all abilities have opportunities to develop fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Recent work has been especially effective in giving pupils strategies to support problem solving. Lessons are thoughtfully structured, and assessment is used well to ensure that work is pitched at the right level. As soon as pupils can demonstrate their understanding, they are given more challenging work. The most able pupils are encouraged to consolidate their learning by explaining their strategies to their peers.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that pupils in key stage 2, including the most able, are making good progress. Published data shows that progress across key stage 2 has been at least good for three years. The proportion achieving the expected standard in Year 6 was broadly in line with the national average in 2018. However, the proportion achieving the higher standard has been below the national average for three years. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to raise the proportion of pupils achieving higher standards.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have opportunities to study a wide range of subjects in depth and produce work of a high quality. The use of some specialist teachers is supporting continued improvement. Careful planning is helping to ensure that pupils develop and build on their skills, knowledge and understanding in a progressive way each year. Investigation work in science is well structured. Work across the wider curriculum is providing pupils with lots of opportunities to apply and practise their English skills in lots of different contexts. There are also some occasions when pupils can apply their mathematics skills. Subject leaders are knowledgeable about strengths and areas for development. They have opportunities to share their expertise with colleagues and have lots of opportunities to influence practice across the school. This is helping to ensure that pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- You have made sure that attendance has a high profile in school. The attendance tree is a prominent feature in the hall, and class attendance is reported to

parents in every newsletter. The trust has provided the school with strong support. This has been especially effective in improving attendance for disadvantaged pupils. Attendance overall has improved. However, current attendance rates are below the national average for the last academic year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to improve teaching, learning and assessment become embedded so that attainment and progress improve for all groups of pupils, especially in key stage 2
- attendance continues to improve so that it is at least in line with national figures.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wakefield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Chris Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I made visits to all classes with you. I met with the English and mathematics leaders. I looked at pupils' work in a wide range of subjects.

I met with four governors and three representatives from the multi-academy trust, including the chief executive officer.

I talked to several parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I also took account of the 19 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

I talked informally with pupils in lessons, met formally with a group of pupils and listened to several pupils read. I also met with a group of staff.

I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and attendance and safeguarding documentation.