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Mrs Jessica Scott
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Dear Mrs Scott

Short inspection of Larkfields Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since then, the school has grown in pupil numbers and further developed a partnership with a family of six local primary schools. With the governing body, you have explored the opportunities offered by a formal partnership with a local trust and made the decision to take steps to formally secure this relationship.

The school is well led and you have made a number of significant changes to systems and processes, which are clearly making an impact in a range of areas. Parents and carers express their appreciation for the quality of teaching and learning and support provided by classroom teachers and additional adults. The school has achieved a number of awards, including the Sing Up, Eco and Healthy School awards, and benefits from participation in the 'digital leaders' programme. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the school and have developed appropriate plans for improvement. Partnership work with a local teaching school has provided staff with access to specific opportunities for training and development. As a result, the school has identified a number of programmes designed to improve teaching of the core curriculum.

The decision to implement a 'Take Care' charter to express the school's values has been transformative for all members of the school community. Pupils nominate class representatives to act as role models for all aspects of the charter and express a good level of understanding of the importance of the framework. 'Take Care' values

are visible in all parts of the school and underpin assembly and reward programmes. Pupils demonstrate strong attitudes to learning and positive social behaviours. It is clear that the strong ethos of the school is helping to raise confidence and provide a range of opportunities for pupils to enjoy and achieve.

Leaders have responded to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report by developing pupils' skills in mathematics and English. The subject leader for mathematics has identified the importance of developing confidence in reasoning and problem solving. Targeted investment in appropriate resources and training has raised the level of expectation of what pupils are capable of. The use of learning journeys enables pupils to apply their prior knowledge and assess the distance travelled. As a result, the attainment of most pupils from their starting points in mathematics is improving.

The subject leader for English has invested in a whole-school strategy for improving pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Routine use of learning enablers in every classroom is helping to raise pupils' aspirations for the quality of presentation. Pupils are well supported by detailed and regular marking and feedback. They report positively on the use of improvement prompts to move them on to the next stage in their learning. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by leaders is helping to ensure that training needs are swiftly identified and the confidence of teachers developed. A range of well-planned nurture and intervention spaces also ensures that the specific needs of pupils can be addressed through targeted interventions.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have developed an effective safeguarding culture, including well-designed policies and procedures. Where pupils require extended levels of support from external agencies, leaders track the progress of agreed actions. The single central record is comprehensive, with clear evidence that appropriate checks take place to ensure safer recruitment practice. Responsibility for safeguarding is shared across the leadership team, which regularly audits the robustness of practice. Staff receive appropriate training and regular updates, including key messages about current topics, such as the dangers presented by sexting and peer-on-peer abuse. The principles of equality and diversity are well understood and staff are required to examine the specific threat of radicalisation in order to ensure that pupils are well informed and fully protected.

Anti-bullying messages are clearly communicated throughout the school. Pupils consider that the school provides a safe and welcoming environment and are clear about how to report concerns and get help. The importance of e-safety is communicated to pupils and parents through themed days and the promotion of positive messages about healthy usage. The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour, with rewards and sanctions outlined clearly in a detailed policy. The introduction of the 'Star' behaviour system ensures that pupils take shared responsibility for the quality of their learning relationships. The introduction of restorative conversations and social stories designed to model positive behaviours

has had a significant impact on the number of incidents of poor behaviour recorded by staff.

Levels of attendance of pupils at the school have remained above the national average for some time. The school has implemented a robust attendance monitoring system and works closely with the local authority to manage persistent absences. Leaders are clear about the importance of swiftly identifying children missing from education. The school also works closely with a range of agencies to promote health and well-being, including access to a counselling service hosted by the school each week.

Inspection findings

- Significant efforts are made by the school to engage with parents. This includes the use of a digital reward system through which activities and achievements can be viewed. Parents are regularly informed about their child's progress and attainment and invited to accompany the teacher on themed learning walks. A range of well-attended training events has been offered, covering topics such as invisible disabilities and cyber bullying.
- The school has developed a wide range of initiatives designed to improve pupils' engagement in reading. For example, there is the newly developed library placed at the heart of the school alongside a 'reading for pleasure' strategy. The subject leader for English has refreshed teachers' understanding of the principles of guided reading. Pupils are now benefiting from the introduction of a range of different text types, including those drawn from digital media.
- The school has introduced writing portfolios and journals designed to promote resilience and quality. Teachers use drafting exercises to assist pupils to understand the impact of the editing process on the development of quantity and quality in writing. There is good evidence that the implementation of strategic initiatives designed to develop pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar, together with a focus on marking for literacy, are improving fluency in writing.
- Teachers have invested significant energy in the design and creation of effective wall displays containing spelling prompts and reminders about parts of speech. Nevertheless, lower prior attaining pupils and those who are disadvantaged continue to make slow progress in writing. The action plans produced by leaders for tracking the success of key actions lack sufficient detail and do not report on impact. Improving pupils' progress in reading and writing continues to be a key priority for the school.
- Pupils benefit from a vibrant and creative curriculum that is well planned, with careful consideration of the demands of the national curriculum programmes of study. Topic-based work includes a range of cross-curricular learning opportunities, and writing portfolios contain evidence of high levels of engagement in activities on subjects as diverse as the human body and historical change.
- Parents report high levels of satisfaction with the quality of support provided by the school for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or

disabilities. High-quality nurture provision is well planned and led by highly trained professionals. Less able pupils benefit from the delivery of sequences of learning that include carefully targeted questioning and focused group work. Information on the provision for, and progress of, pupils who have additional needs is clearly articulated. The impact of this work on mental health and well-being is also captured and celebrated by leaders.

- Leaders have developed clear protocols for marking and feedback that ensure that pupils' work is frequently and carefully considered. Teachers 'mark in the moment' to ensure that feedback is rapid and effective during lessons. There is also significant evidence that pupils value and act on the improvement prompts given in their books.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they act more swiftly on the information provided by the school's assessment system in order to accelerate the progress and attainment of pupils in reading and writing
- there is further targeted investment in developing the skills and capacity of middle leaders to monitor and improve the quality of teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Hollis-Brown
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and shared my lines of enquiry. I also met with the subject leaders for mathematics and English and with representatives of the governing body. I considered the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, along with some free-text comments, and met with parents at the start of the school day. Together with senior leaders, I visited classes in Years 3, 4 and 6 and considered pupils' work in books. I observed pupils' behaviour and met with a group of 'Take Care' representatives to discuss their experiences of the school. I viewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, its plans for further improvement and information on pupils' current progress. I considered a number of policy documents, including those related to safeguarding and support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. I also considered recruitment checks in order to confirm the robustness of practice.