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Mr Ben O'Connell
Headteacher
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Dear Mr O'Connell

Short inspection of Weston-on-Trent CofE (VA) Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 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 has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since that inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing, including your appointment in 2014. As the new headteacher and an advanced skills teacher, you have prioritised the development of the quality of learning and teaching in the school through individualised support, staff training and modelling to help ensure that staff understand your expectations. Frequent reviews ensure that staff are clear about their next steps and these are checked upon regularly. These checks have helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

Your previous inspection report asked you to review the mathematics provision for the pupils in the school. Effective strategic planning alongside clear expectations for teachers has helped to improve the quality of learning and teaching in mathematics. Books clearly show the impact of your actions as most pupils grapple with their learning across a broad range of areas. Where progress is slower, records evidence the improvements the school has made to ensure that teaching improves.

Both you and your senior teacher have a clear understanding of what constitutes high-quality teaching and learning. You have used these skills well to support the development of staff. Staff say that they have benefited from support provided by the school and that it has had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. The inspection findings support this view. Your senior teacher has been invited to talk to schools to share how her approach to teaching English is improving outcomes for pupils.

Pupils' attitudes to learning continue to be a strength of the school. For example, during the inspection, pupils worked diligently at their tables, showing persistence and application. Furthermore, they remained focused and engaged as they worked through well-thought-out and well-pitched learning activities. When discussing their learning, pupils were very articulate and confident about their learning and how the teachers support them. They were rightly proud of their work and their learning.

This positive attitude to school and learning is reflected in pupils' good attendance. Levels of pupil absence and persistent absence have remained well below the national average for the past three years and are on track to be in a similar position this year.

You are very proud of the curriculum your school offers. There are many opportunities to develop a broad range of skills. Detailed planning offers clear guidance on the skills that need to be developed, with many exciting opportunities such as forest schools and learning about 'Marvin's Adventures in India'. The pupils of the school spoke enthusiastically about the range of learning experiences they enjoy at the school and your teacher's blog sites offer a window into the exciting activities that support their learning across the curriculum.

At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, standards dipped from their previously high levels in 2016 to be in line with the national average in reading and mathematics while still remaining high in writing. Your actions have brought about improvements. Current school information, supported by my scrutiny of pupils' work as well as observations of learning, shows that pupils are on track to be well above national averages in 2018 in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, standards declined from previously strong outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016, to be broadly in line with national averages. This was particularly true for the most able pupils. You identified inaccuracies in historic key stage 1 assessments and now feel that this 2017 assessment information is more reflective of the actual skills of the pupils. Staff have worked actively with colleagues from other schools in moderating pupils' work to assure the accuracy of these judgements better.

At the end of the Reception Year more children than seen nationally reach a good level of development. They are well prepared for Year 1.

The school has very few pupils on roll who are eligible to receive funding from the pupil premium. As such, their individual needs are met on a specific basis through targeted expenditure. Variations in the achievements of this group of pupils are more related to individual need rather than group trends.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Regular checks completed by senior leaders ensure that the school's password-protected single central record meets legal requirements. This central

record is supplemented with annotated detailed individual record sheets which ensure that all information remains up to date. The school is not afraid to take positive steps to ensure pupils' safety and has turned away contractors who are not able to produce the necessary documentation to support their suitability.

Staff spoken to were aware of the possible signs and indicators that may suggest that a pupil is at risk and they were clear about the reporting systems the school has in place. Key documentation available in the staffroom alongside advice and guidance from the designated safeguarding leaders ensure that staff are well supported in taking action to safeguard the pupils at the school.

Inspection findings

- You have used the experience and expertise of external partner agencies to support the improvement in the school. You have acted swiftly on their advice to ensure that the pupils receive a high quality of education.
- You are rightly proud of the pupils of the school. They are committed learners who are keen and eager to learn. During lessons they focus very well during teacher input and discussions and are well challenged through effective questioning. They can work independently for sustained periods of time, producing work that is of high quality.
- Your accurate monitoring and evaluation has led you to focus upon ensuring that more pupils attain the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Your drive to improve standards in reading led you to organise some action research in the school where you considered the impact of two different approaches. Shared lesson visits, outcomes and listening to pupils enabled you to refine your approach to teaching reading.
- In reading, the impact of this work is evident in books, with the most able pupils telling me, 'it is really hard to find the answers' and that the new reading books are 'more exciting now'. School initiatives to encourage pupils to read more widely and more regularly are having a positive impact on pupils' desire to read.
- In reading, current school performance information for Year 6 alongside my lesson visits, work scrutiny and discussions with pupils show that more pupils are expected to reach the higher standards this year. However, you recognise that there is still more that can be done to improve this area further. We agreed that clearer expectations for the higher-attaining pupils will further support the recently improved approach to teaching reading.
- In mathematics, pupils now have lots of opportunities to apply their skills and use them to solve problems. Workbooks sampled showed a diverse range of problem-solving challenges, including the use of games to provide a fun stimulus for converting different units of measure. Work scrutiny and lesson visits showed that in most year groups, the most able pupils are well challenged, and assessment is used well to ensure the appropriate next steps in learning. However, there is some inconsistency in the provision of opportunities in mathematics for the higher-attaining pupils to grapple with their learning and be moved on more quickly when they have secured their understanding.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in reading by ensuring that teachers are clear about the necessary skills that need to be taught
- they increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils are moved on more swiftly when they demonstrate that they have acquired the skill
 - securing greater consistency in the school's approach to meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Lakatos
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I looked at the 44 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, met with several parents and looked at two letters shared with me from parents. The views and opinions of staff were also considered by looking at the nine responses to the staff questionnaire and through meetings I held. I spoke to the head of school improvement for the Diocese of Derby and the governors of the school. I spoke to pupils around the school and during a meeting. I looked over monitoring and evaluation documents alongside teacher improvement plans and lesson study reports. I looked at school information, including your self-evaluation report and your school improvement plan. I shared lesson visits with both yourself and your senior teacher and we jointly looked through pupils' books.