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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Jane Clayton
Principal
Outwood Primary Academy Ledger Lane
Ledger Lane
Outwood
Wakefield
West Yorkshire
WF1 2PH

Dear Mrs Clayton

Short inspection of Outwood Primary Academy Ledger Lane

Following my visit to the school on 17 April 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 May 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 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 the previous inspection, you have been uncompromising in your drive for further improvement. The school motto, 'children first, raising standards, transforming lives', is evident in all aspects of the school's work. Staff and pupils are proud of their school and have high aspirations. One parent commented: 'The school encourages my daughter to do her best at all times.' Leaders, governors and the trust rigorously monitor all aspects of school life. As a result, they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and of the areas that can be further improved. Staff appreciate the range of professional development opportunities provided across the trust. They talk positively about collaboration with staff in other schools. Consequently, best practice is shared widely. Staff feel well supported by senior leaders. Staff morale is high.

Pupils are confident and resilient learners. They develop the skills of independent learning from the early years onwards. As a result, pupils are resourceful learners who are not afraid to make mistakes. Pupils embrace the challenges in their

learning. Pupils told me that they particularly enjoy mathematics but also the different subjects they learn about through the wider curriculum. Some pupils told me that they 'love learning, because it's fun'. Pupils are respectful and polite to visitors. They talk warmly about the leadership opportunities that they receive. For example, pupils have an opportunity to influence school policies and procedures through involvement in the school parliament. Consequently, they feel fully involved in the life of the school. Pupils understand the importance of British values. They are respectful of other religions and cultures. You acknowledge that the school's strong work on British values can be enhanced through raising pupils' awareness of the risks of radicalisation further. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their learning. They are well behaved in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel challenged, particularly in mathematics. They enjoy the opportunities to work together, and help and support each other.

Since the previous inspection, your initiatives have improved attendance to just below the national average. You have brought about improvement to the way adults support children's speech and communication in the early years. You have also ensured that teachers provide pupils with challenging learning activities. Teachers regularly check pupils' understanding in lessons through highly effective questioning. They now plan activities successfully to meet pupils' needs from their different starting points. As a result, in key stage 1 and 2, pupils' outcomes have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, at both the expected and higher standard, is above the national averages for these subjects. The progress made by pupils in writing has been exceptionally strong over the past three years. In 2017, the progress pupils made in writing was in the top 1% of schools nationally. Disadvantaged pupils make particularly strong progress in writing by the end of Year 6. Consequently, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for secondary school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your safeguarding team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date. You ensure that staff are regularly updated about any safeguarding issues through weekly staff briefings. Staff understand the important role that they play in keeping children safe. Thorough checks are made on adults who work in the school. You ensure that pupils and their families receive appropriate and timely support when needed. You have good links with outside agencies to support vulnerable families.

Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school. The parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey agree. Pupils told me that bullying is rare in school. School records corroborate this. Pupils told me that if bullying does happen, adults deal with any issues quickly and effectively. Pupils talk positively about the 'restorative practice' system that enables them to talk through any issues that they may have. Pupils were able to share with me ways that they learn about keeping safe online. They know the importance of telling an adult if they are concerned about anything inappropriate that they may see on the internet.

Inspection findings

- The quality of pupils' writing is a key strength across the school. Pupils know precisely what they need to include in their written work. They are given extensive opportunities to apply their writing skills and knowledge to a range of interesting activities. Expectations of writing are consistent across all year groups. As a result, pupils make rapid progress in their writing. Pupils enjoy writing. They show pride in their work and present their work well. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across the curriculum. Pupils told me that they find the topics taught in subjects such as history, geography and art interesting, and they appreciate the opportunities to apply their writing skills in these topics.
- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics as a result of highly effective teaching and a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Consequently, attainment is above the national average. The school is a lead school for mathematics within the trust. As a result, there are numerous opportunities for staff to share good practice across the trust. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes in their mathematics lessons. Pupils are given immediate feedback on their work through the school's programme of 'same day intervention'. Pupils are provided with activities that are well matched to their needs, and are given timely support when needed. This ensures that no pupils fall behind in their learning. Pupils are given opportunities to reason about their mathematical ideas and grapple with complex mathematical problems. All classrooms have 'working walls' which are effective in supporting pupils in their learning and enable them to work independently of an adult. Pupils collaborate well and help each other. Teachers set high expectations of what pupils can and will achieve. As a result, pupils are required to think and work hard.
- Attendance is improving, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. However, despite leaders' best efforts, attendance is slightly below the national average, and persistent absence is slightly above the national average. You have raised the importance of good attendance across the school, and pupils are responding well to the range of incentives and rewards on offer. You are working hard with parents to ensure that attendance continues to improve, and you have rightly identified attendance as a whole-school priority. Indeed, you have already appointed a dedicated safeguarding and attendance officer to support you in this work.
- Since the previous inspection, you have improved the early years and Reception class outdoor areas. There is a wide range of interesting activities available for children to explore. You continue to prioritise the provision in the early years with your plans for a new building. Adults within the early years now support the development of children's communication skills effectively. As a result, children are confident and appear very happy and settled. The improvements that you have made to what is on offer in early years has ensured that increasing proportions of children achieve and exceed a good level of development by the end of Reception. While you are pleased with the improvement to your outdoor provision thus far, it is testament to your high standards that you acknowledge

there is still work to do to ensure that outdoor activities promote learning as effectively as those seen indoors.

- Pupils' outcomes in phonics have been consistently above the national average over time. Inspection evidence shows that pupils use and apply their phonics skills securely. Pupils' application of their phonics skills is particularly effective, and makes a significant contribution to the accuracy of their writing. This underpins pupils' confidence to read and write unfamiliar words accurately.
- Historically pupils' progress in reading has not been as strong as in writing and mathematics, particularly for middle prior attaining pupils. Although above national average outcomes, pupils' attainment has shown greater variability compared to writing and mathematics. You have rightly focused on the development of a reading culture across the school in order to gain greater consistency in pupils' reading outcomes. Visiting authors and daily reading are helping to increase pupils' interest in reading. Most pupils who I talked to said that they read often and that they enjoy reading. Teachers have been successful in developing pupils' knowledge of unfamiliar vocabulary through activities such as 'word of the week'. Work in pupils' books confirms that pupils are required to find definitions and apply newly learned vocabulary in meaningful sentences. Pupils learn a range of appropriate skills in reading, such as retrieving information, making inferences and formulating predictions. As a result of the increased focus on reading, current pupils are making more rapid progress. However, you are aware that there is further work to do to ensure that progress in reading matches that seen in writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of reading is refined further so that pupils' progress in reading matches that seen in writing and mathematics
- attendance continues to improve and persistent absence is reduced further
- the outdoor learning environment in the early years promotes learning as effectively as that seen indoors.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the 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

Michele Costello
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I made brief visits to most classes with you. I also looked at the work in pupils' books with the mathematics leader, the two English leaders and the vice principal. I met with you and members of your senior leadership team. I met with three governors from the academy council, including the chair and vice-chair. I also met with the chief executive officer of the trust and the chief executive principal.

I took account of the 18 responses from parents to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and the 15 free-text comments. I met with a group of staff. I talked informally to pupils during lessons. I met formally with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. I spoke to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day.

I examined a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, governors' minutes, attendance and behaviour logs, and safeguarding information.