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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Miss Paula Whysall
Headteacher
Parkside Junior School
Cokayne Avenue
Ashbourne
Derbyshire
DE6 1EJ

Dear Miss Whysall

Short inspection of Parkside Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 23 March 2017, 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 February 2012.

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 the governing body are persistent in identifying development points in order to achieve the highest outcomes for your pupils. You lead an effective leadership team, where a commitment to continuing professional development demonstrates your drive to improve the school. You have forged links with other schools to further develop your staff and to support transition for your pupils.

Pupils rise to the challenge of meeting the high expectations you and your staff set for them. The behaviour of the pupils entering school at the start of the day was impeccable. They were keen to talk to me and tell me about the strengths of the school, in particular the positive praise you give them and the difference they feel that this makes. Pupils could talk with confidence about their learning and they show respect for one another and the adults with whom they come into contact.

Parents are almost unanimous in their support of the school. Those I spoke with on the playground keenly shared with me how much their children enjoyed school and the expectations about reading with their children at home. Parents feel confident that issues in school will be dealt with and that pupils who need additional support are catered for. Parents all agree that their children are safe at the school and know how to keep themselves safe. The school is working hard to improve attendance of all pupils. Further work needs to be focused on the most vulnerable groups to ensure that their attendance is in line with other pupils in the school.

You and your leadership team have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection. I saw good evidence of pupils participating in whole-class discussions, with a clear focus on their learning. Considerable work has been undertaken to increase opportunities for pupils to participate in the life of the school through the role of the school council. Displays around school show evidence of children participating in a variety of cultural activities. There is not enough evidence, however, that children are celebrating cultural diversity and learning about fundamental British values within their own classes.

Pupils' books show that there is consistency across the school with high expectations of presentation and teachers supporting pupils to move their learning forward. Teachers provide constructive feedback to pupils on their work in accordance with the school's policy.

Leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths. Minutes from meetings and the discussion with governors demonstrate that they hold you and your leadership team to account and are confident to challenge you about the effectiveness of the school's work. The school improvement plan identifies the correct issues for development and all involved are aware of the key issues to be worked on. Reading is one of the key issues on the plan, as further work to accelerate progress in reading needs to be done in order for outcomes to be in line with other subjects at the end of the key stage.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Safeguarding arrangements are clear and adhered to by all staff and are supported by effective training both within the school and externally. This leads to a positive ethos where swift actions ensure that statutory requirements are met.

Pupils and parents feel that the school is a safe place where adults can be relied upon to deal quickly and effectively with any problems. You and your leadership team have taken a brave decision to step away from the early help offer from the county council and you are clear about the pathways for your school, which are effectively managed. The pastoral provision you have in place is swift in supporting pupils and their families and there is clarity around the roles taken by members of staff within the school. While not impacting on the quality of safeguarding day to day, there were instances where the administrative process around safeguarding could have been further sharpened. Items brought to the attention of leaders were addressed immediately.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and teachers monitor progress and attainment effectively, considering both published results and their own baseline assessments. Some groups of pupils, for example those in receipt of pupil premium funding, are tracked more regularly. Targeted intervention, due to effective allocation of the pupil premium funding, means that these pupils are making good progress.
- Reading remains a key focus on the school improvement plan, following consecutive years of underachievement in this area. Parents speak confidently about their role in improving reading and pupils talk about their books and targets for improvement. Leaders agree that more needs to be done to strengthen the approach taken to teaching reading and including approaches which focus on meeting the individual needs of learners, where necessary, to ensure that the progress they make quickens further.
- Published information on pupils' attendance shows that some groups are not attending school as often as they should. Leaders monitor attendance carefully and work with families to encourage improvements. This has resulted in improved attendance for some pupils. There is, however, more work to be done to improve the attendance of the most vulnerable groups of pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide support and timely interventions for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring that they achieve well from their starting points. Provision is effectively managed, enabling pupils to progress socially, emotionally and academically over time. Additional adults are deployed effectively to support this group and they are almost universally effective.
- Governors and pupils were unable to talk convincingly about their knowledge of fundamental British values and what the school does to promote an understanding of these values. Similarly, they were unable to give examples of the school's approach to the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding. These aspects, particularly cultural understanding, were not strongly evident among the array of displays in the corridors which celebrate religious education study days, dance and theatre events. There is more to be done to consistently promote these aspects within the classroom environment.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attendance for the most vulnerable pupil groups improves
- the teaching of reading is focused on meeting the needs of pupils, and pupil outcomes in reading improve
- pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and the celebration of cultural diversity is effectively promoted.

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

Yours sincerely

Donna Chambers
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to share the key lines of enquiry and to discuss the school's work. I also met with the school's assistant headteacher as leader for special educational needs provision and to carry out a work scrutiny activity. I met with the child and parent support officer, four governors, pupils from Year 6 and Year 3, and I spoke with eight parents at the start of the day. I also spoke with a few pupils at the start of the day. I considered 57 responses from Parent View. During the morning, we undertook a learning walk together. We worked through a sample of pupils' books from Years 4 and 5 and the books of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Year 6. For this activity, we were joined by the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. I viewed the school's own evaluation of its performance, the school improvement plan and information on how the school allocates its pupil premium funding. I also looked at key policies and minutes from the governing body meetings.