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Mrs N Wetton
Headteacher
J H Godwin Primary School
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Dear Mrs Wetton

Short inspection of J H Godwin Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 2016, 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 December 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the governors and staff have established a culture in keeping with the school's aim to 'inspire and achieve' but in which pupils also aspire to obtain good qualifications, jobs and careers. Almost every pupil makes at least good progress from their starting points. In 2015, for example, a higher than average proportion of pupils made more than expected progress in mathematics.

Since the previous inspection in 2010, the quality of the early years provision in the Reception class has improved. A much higher proportion of children finish their year ready for Year 1. Leaders were also asked to improve the impact of marking, particularly on the quality of pupils' writing. This has worked. Pupils make good progress in writing and attain standards that are similar to the national average by the end of Year 6. In 2015, every Year 6 pupil made the expected progress and a high proportion made more than expected progress.

You and other leaders have taken effective action to identify aspects of the school that need further improvement, such as reading and science. You do this by asking pupils frequently for their views, by carefully checking and tracking assessment information and by observing lessons and looking at pupils' work. You know that you need to increase the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level for their age, and increase standards in reading, particularly in using phonics (the sounds that letters make in words).

Safeguarding is effective.

The safety of pupils is a high priority. There are thorough procedures in place to follow up any safety concerns with family support workers, attendance officers, social services, the police and other agencies. You are persistent in making sure that the different agencies concentrate on pupils' well-being. You and other staff in the school know the pupils and their families very well and this enables you to identify and break down any barriers to learning. The pastoral care you and the staff provide has made a difference in this community and this is helping to protect pupils.

The governing body has set up an effective system of vetting staff and volunteers who work with pupils and making sure that the school site is secure. There were some clerical errors in the formation of the single central record which were rectified by the end of the inspection. Overall, you and leaders have made sure that arrangements to protect and safeguard pupils are fit for purpose and any records are detailed and at least good quality.

Inspection findings

- You, and the teacher who leads the early years, have taken effective action to improve the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and mathematics. The very low standards of the past have gone and pupils are now making better progress. In 2015, for example, almost two thirds of pupils attained a good level of development and were ready for Year 1, a significant increase on 2014. There has also been a three-year increase in the standards of disadvantaged pupils (these are those who are eligible for free school meals or who are identified as 'looked after'). You are making good use of government funding and, as a result, the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally are closing quickly.
- You and other leaders have identified some weaknesses in the teaching of reading and phonics. The methods staff use to teach phonics have changed and are more effective. In 2015, for example, Year 1 pupils were much closer to the national average in the national phonics assessment than in previous years. Given their low starting points, these results constitute good progress. There is still some way to go to make sure that all pupils receive the best phonics teaching.
- You have correctly highlighted the need to further raise reading standards across the school. You have trained staff, monitored the quality of lessons and taken into account pupils' views. You have also set up a number of initiatives, including studying a well-known poet and author for each class each term, more visits from established authors and creating a book club for the most-able readers. There is still some way to go to make sure that a higher proportion of pupils exceed the expectations for their age in reading and there is a stronger link between what they read and what they write in lessons. In some classes, for example, they are reading fiction books but are learning to write non-fiction, such as instructions.
- A key issue for the school now is to make sure that a higher proportion of pupils exceed the expectations for their age across all subjects, particularly in Key

Stage 1. At the moment, teachers in Key Stage 2 have to work exceptionally hard to plug the gaps in pupils' learning. Very few pupils, for example, attain Level 3 by the end of Year 2 which means also that very few are in a position to be able to attain the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6.

- The local authority has provided helpful advice and support to the school to raise the quality of provision in the early years. In addition, the school has benefitted from support from the Education Welfare Service, the special educational needs team and other services.
- The governing body has very good oversight over pupils' assessment information, over teaching and also of the effectiveness of leaders and managers. They challenge positively, are highly knowledgeable and provide advice, guidance and support. Governors have taken highly effective decisions. The waiting list for a pupil to be seen by a speech and language therapist, for example, is often over 12 months. The governors have used funding to employ a speech specialist and, as a result, pupils receive immediate diagnosis and a programme of support to speed up their progress. Governors evaluate their own impact and effectiveness and identify key skills which the governing body needs when recruiting new governors. The Chair of the Governing Body provides outstanding leadership.
- There are a number of school policies that mention equality. However, they do not cover all of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. Even the equality policy does not cover every characteristic. There are also examples in classrooms and in subjects of not all characteristics being included, with gender stereotypes.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level of work for their age increases to be at least similar to the national average, particularly in reading and in all subjects in Key Stage 1
- school policies, the curriculum and classrooms reflect the full range of protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act 2010.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire West and Chester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

In addition to you, I met with the teachers who are leading improvements in reading, the teacher who leads the early years and other teaching and non-teaching staff. I met with eight out of the 11 members of the governing body and I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I considered 123 responses from pupils, 25 from parents and 23 responses from staff to Ofsted's online surveys. I observed some teaching of reading and looked through documentation including the school's policies and improvement plans, and pupils' work.