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Miss Tracey Webster  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Webster

### **Short inspection of Ladbroke Junior Mixed and Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 June 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The overwhelmingly positive feedback from the staff questionnaire and Parent View is testament to your strong and inspiring leadership. You seek high quality in all that the school provides, ensuring that staff and pupils do their best and strive to do even better. Staff and parents share a common purpose in putting pupils and their achievements first. This is because you appreciate and value their contribution in supporting and encouraging every child to enjoy success in learning and in their personal development. Their comments confirm this. Staff said that:

- 'The school is led extremely well... it is a special place to be.'
- 'The school encourages every member of the school family to do their best at all times to contribute to pupils' bright futures.'
- 'The leadership team is supportive but with clear and challenging expectations for all children.'

Equally, in their comments, many parents recognise the impact that your leadership has in promoting a strong sense of community where every child matters. Many said that you and the staff are approachable and helpful in resolving any issues that they raise, quickly and effectively. Of the 92 respondents to Parent View, 98% would recommend the school to another parent.

I was able to confirm, from the school's national and current data that since the previous inspection, most pupils in the early years, and key stages 1 and 2 have continued to make good progress to reach or exceed the expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

I checked that leaders had successfully implemented the 2014 national curriculum, making adjustments to teaching and assessment practice to ensure that pupils are learning all that they should across the full range of subjects. You provide pupils with a broad and enriched curriculum taking their interests and preferences into account. This contributes to their enjoyment and engagement in learning. Images seen of pupils participating in a copious range of special events, educational visits, residential trips and extra-curricular clubs show how action-packed and fun-filled they are. The Owl House (a beautifully constructed environmentally friendly building in the school grounds) offers a unique and tranquil setting for pupils to pursue their individual interests at breaktimes and an inspiring space for teaching and learning.

In the early years classes, we saw children absorbed in a range of activities that promoted learning and enabled them to learn from each other. Indoors, the activities provided scope to challenge Nursery and Reception-aged children equally well. Provision for outdoor play was less challenging and effective. Subject leaders of English, mathematics, art and design, history, geography and computing are doing a fine job in checking that consistently good teaching leads to pupils' good achievement in their subjects. We saw plenty of evidence of this in pupils' good-quality work displayed in classrooms and corridors. However, the work seen in topic books, where pupils record what they have learned in subjects other than English and mathematics, was less impressive. Many of the tasks they had completed were too easy.

Through careful monitoring of pupils' learning, leaders and governors have established that overall, disadvantaged pupils have not been achieving as well as other pupils and a few are frequently absent from school. I made these issues key lines of enquiry for this inspection.

The school's future plans for improvement identify disadvantaged pupils' achievement as a priority. Current information about their learning and the work we looked at in their books, shows that in most classes, disadvantaged pupils are on track to make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year. However, measurable targets specifically for disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment in each subject have not been set. You and the governing body decide future priorities based on thorough analysis and evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses each year. In setting them, you do not clarify how they will improve outcomes for pupils. For example, in identifying 'talk for writing' as a priority, it is not clear why this would make a difference.

Ladbroke is a school where pupils thrive academically and in their personal development. Effective governance ensures that statutory requirements are met. Leaders, staff and governors are reflective and responsive. When they identify that improvements are needed they do not hesitate to take appropriate action. For

example, areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Meetings held to discuss pupils' progress have been formalised and are now documented. You have ensured that teachers use a range of approaches to check how well pupils are learning and adapt teaching accordingly. This means that the school is in safe hands to make continuous improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Safeguarding is a priority and you ensure that everyone plays their part in keeping children safe. Teaching and non-teaching staff are regularly trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. This means that they are in a strong position to identify potentially vulnerable pupils and decide when interventions or referrals are needed.

As a designated lead professional for safeguarding, you keep staff up to date with the latest guidance from the Department for Education and ensure that policies are reviewed to reflect it. You insist that all staff read key policies. Referrals, if need be, are passed on to external agencies quickly and efficiently. Statutory checks made on all staff, governors, regular volunteers and contractors are thorough to ensure their suitability to work with children. Risk assessments for educational visits and health and safety are thorough.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders' and governors' ambition to sustain and improve the quality of teaching and learning came across strongly in all our conversations. We discussed the school's internal evaluation of its work. This is carefully documented and endorsed as accurate in a recent report by the school's improvement adviser. You and the governors use this information effectively to decide what the priorities are for improvement. We agreed that the underlying reasons for selecting your proposed areas for improvement are unclear in the development plan.
- Scrutiny of the school's national data shows that children in the early years are prepared well for Year 1. For three consecutive years the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception was above average. Pupils make good progress in key stage 1 from their starting points. All pupils moved into Year 3 having reached the expected standard in the national phonics screening check.
- In 2016, standards achieved in Year 6 were above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Our observations of pupils' learning in the current Year 6 class and scrutiny of the school's latest information about pupils' learning confirmed that the standards have been sustained and improved this year.
- Just over half of the disadvantaged pupils met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 and none met the higher standard. You provided secure evidence that current disadvantaged pupils are making better progress this year. Leaders record and track their progress carefully. Governors

confirmed that they keep a watchful eye on disadvantaged pupils' achievement and check that spending of pupil premium is having an impact on their learning.

- Written work seen in disadvantaged pupils' books from September to date endorsed your view that most disadvantaged pupils are on track to reach expected standards for their ages by the end of the school year. However, there are no specific targets set for them in the school's development plan.
- We looked at plans for developing the outdoor provision in the early years. Rightly, you and the early years leader have set this as a priority for improvement. Visiting the early years classes confirmed that provision is more challenging for children choosing to play and learn indoors because activities are planned with children's varying ages and stages of development in mind. The same does not apply routinely outside. You and the early years leader have plans in place to address this by improving the range and quality of resources and spaces for learning outside.
- Leaders of English, mathematics, computing, history, geography and art and design lead their subjects confidently and this contributes to pupils' good achievement across a range of subjects. Extensive work has been undertaken by leaders to revise curriculum planning and assessment practice so that it meets the additional requirements set in the 2014 national curriculum. This ensures that pupils of all ages are learning all that they should. Teachers are using an effective system to check how well pupils are performing in each subject. They establish what pupils already know and understand and what they need to learn next.
- Subject leaders know how to gather evidence that tells them what aspects of teaching and learning are effective and what could be even better. Their thorough approach contributes to pupils' strong achievement across the full range of subjects. Work seen in pupils' topic books does not usually reflect that seen in their English and mathematics books. However, work on display and examples of homework provided additional evidence to confirm pupils' good achievement in a range of subjects.
- While most pupils are rarely absent from school unless they are ill, a few vulnerable pupils are persistently absent. We discussed this at length. You have in-depth understanding of individual pupil's circumstances and your meticulous and regular scrutiny of attendance records confirmed that you have strong and effective strategies in place to monitor and improve attendance. You are taking appropriate steps to improve the attendance of the few disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent by talking to their parents directly or referring them to the appropriate services. Some improvement is evident. The overall figure for attendance is close to the national average.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategic plans for improvement specify the expected impact on pupils' achievement so that planned actions make a difference to pupils' learning

- explicit, challenging targets are set and tracked to raise disadvantaged pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics
- pupils are sufficiently and appropriately challenged in their written work in non-core (topic) subjects
- provision for outdoor play activities in the early years is sufficiently challenging.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, and subject leaders for English, mathematics, art and design, computing, history and geography.
- We discussed the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' learning.
- You and I observed teaching and learning in all classes. We looked at a sample of the work in disadvantaged pupils' English, mathematics and topic books.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements, records, files and documentation were examined. Discussions were held with you in your capacity as the designated safeguarding lead.
- I met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- The views of 92 parents who responded to Parent View and 20 staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire were taken into account.