

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr David Erne  
Headteacher  
Weaverham Forest Primary School  
Forest Street  
Weaverham  
Northwich  
Cheshire  
CW8 3EY

Dear Mr Erne

### **Short inspection of Weaverham Forest Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 March 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your strong leadership has created a highly effective school. You analyse school data in detail. As a result, you have an accurate understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs improving. Since your appointment as headteacher, you have made many improvements to the school. Staff, parents and governors all value these positive changes. Staff share your drive and ambition and feel well supported and challenged to make the school even better. Staff morale is high.

You and the staff have established a vibrant and engaging learning environment, which captures pupils' imagination and interests. Pupils say that they love coming to school and enjoy learning. They are confident and respectful and behave well. On the day of the inspection, the responses on Parent View showed that the vast majority of parents were very positive about the school. All parents agreed that their children were happy, safe, well looked after and making good progress. Parents with whom I spoke shared the same positive view.

Governors know the school well. They are well informed and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas to improve. Governors share your determination to improve further the outcomes for pupils. They carry out their duties very effectively, and provide you with a suitable balance of challenge and support.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to make sure that the most able pupils in key stage 1 were given tasks that provided them with greater challenge. You have

successfully addressed this by training all staff in a range of approaches to add greater depth and challenge to learning. The most able pupils are now achieving well across the curriculum. You have also taken effective action to improve the teaching of reading. For example, you have created a new, well-resourced library; each class has a reading for pleasure area related to a curriculum focus or author. Pupils who read daily at home receive praise and their name is added to the class reading scroll. This strong focus on promoting reading has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. More pupils now want to read independently.

Leaders have improved pupils' progress across the school. Although attainment in writing and mathematics in 2016 was slightly below national figures in key stage 2, pupils throughout the school now make good progress in all subjects from their starting points. You rightly identify that some pupils could make even more progress. You recognise that further challenge is needed to ensure that increasing numbers of pupils make even more rapid progress and achieve at a higher level.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. You and the governors are vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are safe. All members of staff receive regular safeguarding training and leaders ensure that staff have a thorough understanding of a range of safeguarding concerns. A rolling programme of training for staff includes sessions on anti-bullying and the 'Prevent' duty. Pupils' safeguarding and pastoral concerns are recorded using online software. These records are kept systematically and include details of concerns, action taken and subsequent outcomes. Pupils' records show that a robust referral system is in place. The designated safeguarding lead has no hesitation in referring pupils to appropriate agencies when concerns arise. Referrals are followed up and escalated if needed. E-safety is taught and regularly revisited within lessons. Secure filtering systems are used effectively to monitor any potential misuse by pupils and staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have a detailed understanding of the data concerning pupils' progress in mathematics. They have taken rapid action to ensure that a greater number of pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations. According to the school's data, more pupils than in previous years are on track to meet the age-related expectations at the end of key stage 2.
- There have been recent changes to the way mathematics is taught throughout school. For example, pupils are no longer taught in ability groups. They are encouraged to challenge themselves by choosing from a menu of tasks with varying degrees of difficulty from 'mild' or 'hot' to 'spicy'. Teachers are very positive about the impact of mixed-ability teaching, and about pupils selecting their own tasks. Teachers said that previously, they had sometimes underestimated the abilities of one or two pupils. Through selecting their own tasks, pupils have demonstrated their abilities, and, as a result, teachers are providing pupils with even harder work.
- Leaders take rapid and decisive action to ensure that the least able pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same rate of progress as others from their starting points. The special educational needs coordinator has robust

tracking systems that enable her to identify pupils who make less progress than expected. When a concern about a pupil's learning is identified, timely, tailored interventions are put in place. This is especially effective for pupils who may need short-term interventions, for example in the development of speech and language, emotional literacy and promotion of mental health. Consequently, senior leaders are able to ensure that no pupils are left behind.

- Lower-attaining pupils are provided with targeted teaching. This is successful in ensuring that pupils understand the concept being taught and make progress in line with that of other pupils.
- You know that if pupils are to achieve at a greater depth, they need to be further challenged. Consequently, you have already taken many actions. Pupils' workbooks in literacy and topic, for example, clearly show improvements in pupils' writing skills. Current data shows that more pupils than previously are on track to achieve at greater depth.
- All teachers are equally committed to raising pupils' expectations and aspirations. The classroom environments are consistently stimulating and vibrant. The very high-quality displays and resources provide clear evidence of what teachers expect pupils to achieve. Pupils have high aspirations and challenge themselves to work to a high standard.
- Senior leaders have recognised that if pupils are to achieve at a greater depth, learning needs to begin rapidly in the early years. Consequently, from September 2016, a skilled teacher who is also senior leader has been teaching the Reception class. The teacher's prior knowledge of what pupils need to know by the end of key stage 2 has raised expectations and increased the rate of learning in Reception. For example, in the indoor and outdoor learning areas, there is a strong focus on language development, reading and mathematics. This is successful in ensuring that children very quickly begin to extend their language skills and develop early literacy and numeracy skills. The focus on extending language skills continues into key stage 1.
- Leaders establish that the school's information about the skills of pupils joining the Reception class is accurate by checking their assessments with colleagues from other schools and the local authority. In recent years, approximately half the children have joined the Reception class with starting points in literacy that are below those typically found. Therefore, links with the co-located preschool have been strengthened and a shared approach to the teaching of literacy has been established. Joint training about early literacy was attended by parents and staff from both settings.
- According to current data, an increasing number of children are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception, with no difference in the progress of boys and girls.
- During the inspection, girls and boys accessed all activities equally and no gender bias was seen. For example, pupils were absorbed in their tasks relating to castles and dragons and spoke confidently about their knowledge of dragons. Some pupils searched for evidence of dragons and made interesting discoveries. Staff encouraged all pupils and listened to their ideas. As a result, pupils were enthused and they wanted to write about their ideas. They did so successfully.
- Senior leaders have taken a number of actions to ensure that pupils are taught varied and interesting lessons so that they make good progress across a range of subjects. Links with

the local high school, for example, have enabled Year 5 pupils to access specialist design technology classrooms and make high-quality working fairground models.

- Developing subject leadership is given a clear priority within the school. Subject leaders monitor teaching and learning and track pupils' progress termly. Leaders ensure that teachers are supported to do their job well by providing training on effective subject leadership. The impact of subject leaders' work is monitored closely.
- You have placed great emphasis on providing good-quality resources in all subjects, including books personalised to each topic. In all subjects, the tasks and ways of presenting pupils' work are highly creative, for example using different pockets, labels, 'pull outs' and 'pop ups'. These books are highly valued by staff and pupils and are a celebration of pupils' learning. As a consequence, the quality of presentation in pupils' workbooks is exceptional.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is an even stronger focus on raising achievement in mathematics, especially in key stage 2
- the changes to the way the curriculum is taught become even more firmly embedded and teachers provide further challenge that enables an increasing number of pupils to achieve at a greater depth.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Loftus  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to talk about the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. I looked at a range of documents, including safeguarding records and recruitment and vetting procedures, school evaluation and improvement plans, attendance data and pupils' progress data. I held discussions with three governors, the designated safeguarding lead, the early years leader and special educational needs coordinator and six teaching staff. I spoke with your local authority school improvement partner. Together, we completed a learning walk of almost all classes and looked at a sample of pupils' books from each class. I looked at the pupil, staff and parent survey responses and considered the comments.