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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Matthew Gaughan
Head of School
Wharncliffe Side Primary School
Brietholmlee Lane
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S35 0DD

Dear Mr Gaughan

Short inspection of Wharncliffe Side Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 2019, 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 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.

The leadership team has an uncompromising desire for the school to improve and this is reflected in the high levels of achievement of all pupils and the very good progress they often make. You are well supported by the executive headteacher who provides significant leadership experience. Your high expectations of staff provide pupils with opportunities to aim high. Staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils do this with confidence and set themselves challenges to be their 'personal best'.

The school has an extremely strong nurturing environment and a highly positive learning culture. You have ensured that the school is a very inclusive place where all pupils are valued and treated equally. Pupils in the integrated resource unit receive high-quality activities which are well matched to their individual needs. Staff use learning resources successfully to enhance learning and increase pupils' progress. Staff are caring and understand the needs of the pupils very well. The integrated resource unit's work is effective; however, more precise recording of progress would contribute to a clearer overview of pupils' progress towards their individual learning targets.

Pupils in the main school receive consistently high-quality teaching. Staff provide pupils with challenge in their learning and extra support for those who require it. Staff encourage independence throughout the school. They promote the values of tolerance, resilience and respect very well. The attitudes of the pupils reflect this learning.

Leaders have very successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Staff have had opportunities to observe the work of teachers in schools other than their own. New ways of teaching and learning in mathematics have ensured that pupils now routinely explain and record the steps they take when solving problems.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school has a very strong safeguarding culture. You ensure that all necessary checks are made for those working with children. All staff understand their responsibilities to keep children safe. They are clear and confident in the procedures they must follow if they have any concerns, no matter how small. They also receive regular training which reflects the issues in modern Britain.

The school building and grounds are secure. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that all staff look after them. Pupils learn how to stay safe when using the internet and how to keep themselves safe outside of school. Pupils are extremely positive and describe the school as 'fantastic and great' and 'just perfect'.

You engage well with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure they provide the best outcomes for pupils' needs and personal development.

Most pupils have high attendance; however, the school's overall attendance is slightly below the national average. This is because pupils in the integrated resource unit must attend a wide range of services, including specialist medical appointments.

The school works well to support pupils and their families when they are in need. The newly formed parents' forum is concentrating on issues such as online safety, self-image, financial worries, diet and sleep deprivation.

Parents are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the school. Comments such as: 'Words cannot express what Wharnccliffe Side and its wonderful staff have done for my child and us as a family' and 'I feel the school is excellent and second to none. My children enjoy going to school. They are making excellent progress over each year' are typical of those received.

Inspection findings

- Children in the early years get off to a strong start. Activities are varied, engaging and exciting. They support children's development in literacy, language and communication very well. Staff encourage imaginative play and during the inspection a group of children were fully immersed in 'pirating', steering the pirate ship and looking for their buried treasure. The outdoor play area stimulates learning through play. Children are kept very busy with the variety of activities on offer. In the classroom children showed their skills and knowledge of sounds that letters make to identify a range of words that started with a given letter.
- By the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, mathematics and science has improved and is now above the national average. By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average. Pupils reaching a higher standard was significantly above the national average for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy a stimulating curriculum. They talk to leaders about the positive aspects of the curriculum and the aspects that they did not enjoy as much. Leaders use this information to continually update and modify the content. Pupils develop strong knowledge over a range of different subjects. This is because leaders have ensured that subjects other than English and mathematics have equal importance in the broad curriculum.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is well developed. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visitors to school including the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The school promotes the fundamental British values very well through the broad curriculum. Pupils learn how to be self-confident and consequently most have high self-esteem. This could be seen during the marvellous singing session where several pupils sang solo, with no visible sign of nervousness or self-doubt.
- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around school is exemplary. The high expectations begin in the Nursery and are consistent throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. They understand how negative behaviour can affect their learning and the learning of others. Pupils have high aspirations for themselves and understand the importance of gaining a good education.
- The integrated provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is very well led. Teaching is strong and highly personalised to meet the needs of each pupil. Pupils thrive and spend time in the mainstream areas of school, for example by attending for registration in their peer group classes. Staff in the integrated resource unit are highly skilled and understand the pupils and their needs very well. However, staff do not always record the small steps of learning sharply enough to have a clear overview of each pupil's progress toward their education, health and care plan targets.
- Governors spend time in school and as a result have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They take part in a variety of leadership activities such as learning walks, book scrutiny and discussion with

pupils about their experiences at school. Governors hold leaders stringently to account; they plan for meetings and ask a variety of probing questions. Governors have a broad range of backgrounds, which adds to the levels of challenge that they provide.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress towards their targets in their education, health and care plans is recorded more precisely to provide a clearer overview of their learning development.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Roe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other leaders, including the executive headteacher, those responsible for pupils with SEND and pupils in the early years. This was to evaluate the school's strengths and areas you are further developing. We also discussed improvements since the previous inspection. I visited all classes in the school, sometimes accompanied by the executive headteacher. I reviewed work in pupils' books across a range of year groups and subjects. I spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, about their learning and experiences of school. I read and scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including attendance information and documents relating to behaviour, exclusions, safeguarding and child protection. I also considered a number of responses from parent, pupil and staff online surveys.