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Ms Rachel Burton
Headteacher
Riverside Junior School
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Dear Ms Burton

Short inspection of Riverside Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 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 April 2015.

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 your team share a clear vision and a passion to ensure that all the pupils in your care do well during their time at Riverside Junior school. You work effectively to ensure that every pupil has a rich and exciting range of experiences. Your pupils are at the heart of everything that you do. You and your fellow leaders have worked hard to establish the school's characteristics of 'expertise', 'responsible attitudes', 'eloquence', 'wonder' and 'Yorkshire grit' in your pupils. These are demonstrated by the pupils in their day-to-day life in school.

You have successfully built a team of high-quality teachers, teaching assistants and support staff. All staff share your commitment to delivering the school's values of 'Children at the centre of learning' and 'Empowered through active and engaging teaching'. This was evident from talking with staff, pupils and governors.

The governing body is highly effective. Governors know the school well. They use a range of data, reports and first-hand information to check the school's overall effectiveness. They have regular training to improve the quality of their work and their knowledge about key aspects of their role. They are highly ambitious for the school. They support and challenge you and your staff well.

Pupils' personal development is central to the ethos of the school. Pupils work hard and behave very well. They enjoy the range of roles and responsibilities that they are given.

They are proud of their school, which they feel is a caring place where they are safe and challenged to do their best.

Pupils are eager to learn. They talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of lessons and say that teachers make learning fun and interesting. Pupils said, 'Teachers really think about what we're learning about. They make us learn about things that are fun and exciting.' Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities that they can attend, including craft, sports and choir clubs. Pupils value the lunchtime activities, which include Lego club and mathematics club. They also said that they really appreciate the new equipment that has been provided for them in the playground.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to raise the expectations of presentation of pupils' work, especially in writing and mathematics. Presentation in pupils' workbooks has generally improved across the school. However, there are still some pupils whose presentation is not as good as it could be. This is due to inconsistent teacher expectations.

Teachers plan interesting and motivating activities that engage pupils well. When pupils work independently, they show resilience and determination. They concentrate for an extended period of time. On the few occasions when pupils are not on task, this is because they are not clear about the task, due to a lack of clear teacher instructions.

At the last inspection, leaders were also asked to improve leadership and management in areas other than English. All leaders in the school have been unwavering in their determination to improve their subjects. This is reflected in the passion that all leaders have for their subjects and the clear, precise actions that are identified and that have the most positive impact on improvements. The capacity of the leadership across the school has really developed. Through very effective modelling of strong middle leadership, leaders of curriculum and humanities are all having a demonstrable positive impact on outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and there is a strong culture in the school of keeping pupils safe. Staff have a thorough understanding about their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding pupils. Staff are well trained and they know how to raise concerns about pupils' welfare or safety. Leaders check the effectiveness of this training through regular updates and reviews.

Pupils are confident about how to keep themselves safe online. The pupils with whom I spoke reported that they feel safe and secure in the school. One pupil said, 'Do I feel safe in the school? Yes! Teachers are there for us. They're here to keep us safe – they'd risk their lives to keep us safe. They are really good at sorting stuff out.' Pupils also know that they should speak to a trusted adult if they feel worried. Pupils are very confident that adults in the school will listen to any concerns that they have. Pupils said that playtimes are harmonious, and people rarely fall out or call each other names. One pupil said, 'This is a lovely school because all of the children are so open-minded.'

Inspection findings

- During the inspection I followed a number of lines of enquiry. Firstly, I considered how well teaching ensured that pupils were able to achieve well in writing. This was because although the majority of pupils achieve the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2, very few pupils achieved a greater depth standard in 2017 and 2018. You and your team have taken effective action to improve outcomes in writing for all pupils in key stage 2. You have begun to support teachers with improving their subject knowledge so that they can plan and challenge pupils successfully. As a result, the proportion working at the greater depth has increased across the school.
- I also looked at how effectively disadvantaged pupils were being taught to read. The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Teachers are skilled in using different approaches to get pupils to think about texts. Pupils are well trained to work together to read challenging texts. For example, pupils take on jobs when reading, such as the predictor, clarifier and questioner. Through this, the pupils are able to access more challenging texts. Questioning is highly effective in developing deeper thinking. Staff think carefully about the type of questions they ask and how to develop thinking further. This is especially effective in the reading session, where, for example, teachers model highly effective questions, and pupils are encouraged to think on their own.
- All pupils read high-quality books, both independently and in class, such as *Wonder* and *Listen to the Moon*. These books have helped improve pupils' understanding of how a text is written and authorial choices. They are able to discuss texts with enthusiasm and show a real love of reading.
- My next area of inspection focus was on the school's curriculum. The school's curriculum is inspiring. Your curriculum leader has led the staff, pupils and local community to design a curriculum that has the pupils and the community at the heart of it. Learning is well thought-out and builds sequentially on prior learning. The curriculum allows pupils to apply their learning in a purposeful way, with real life outcomes as the goal. For example, pupils spoke with enthusiasm about how they start their learning with a 'wonder week' and end their learning with a 'wonder week'. This is where pupils apply their knowledge to a real-life challenge so they can see the purpose of their learning.
- My final line of enquiry looked at what leaders are doing to address the high number of pupils who are regularly absent from school. Through the effective work being done by the school and the educational welfare officer, current figures show that attendance is improving overall. Pupils who were regularly absent from school are now in school more. However, disadvantaged pupils still miss more school than their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation across the curriculum
- teachers check that pupils are secure with their learning before moving them on to independent learning activities

- they improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils to be at least as good as that of their peers.

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

Yours sincerely

Eve Morris
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders and discussed my lines of enquiry. I also met with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, a range of subject leaders and a member of the safeguarding team. I considered the 51 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 30 free-text comments received. I also took into account the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 87 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I visited all classes in the school and I looked at examples of pupils' work. I spoke to pupils and I also studied a range of documentation covering different aspects of the school's work.