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7 March 2019

Ms Teresa Shrestha
Headteacher
Windmill L.E.A.D. Academy
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Nottinghamshire
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Dear Ms Shrestha

Short inspection of Windmill L.E.A.D. Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 February 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 January 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 have worked with your leadership team to establish a vibrant and energetic learning community. Leaders have developed, together with pupils and staff, a clear vision for the school and identified the values that underpin it. Staff have a shared commitment to high standards of pastoral care, ambition for pupils' achievement and a desire to ensure that pupils become good citizens in the world around them.

Since the previous inspection, the school experienced a period of turbulence. Standards at the school declined. Following your appointment in September 2017, you and your team quickly identified what needed to be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school. These areas were addressed through well-planned and high-quality training supported by the academy trust. Teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics has improved. Leaders' regular checks on learning have established a consistency of approach. Standards have now improved and pupils across the school are making strong progress. Morale among the staff is high.

Teachers have worked alongside other colleagues to make sure that their assessments are accurate. They plan learning so that pupils are building on what they already know in mathematics and English. Teachers' feedback identifies misconceptions and provides challenge so that pupils can improve their writing further. Pupils write for a variety of reasons. Younger pupils compare Sneinton past

and present. Older pupils write newspaper articles and persuasive letters about the treatment of workhouse children, drawing on their knowledge of the Victorian period and the novel 'Oliver Twist'. Teachers plan visits which enrich pupils' learning. For example, a visit to The Holocaust Centre and the opportunity to speak with a survivor stimulated high-quality diary entries written by the older pupils.

Pupils' fluency in mathematics is improving and they are beginning to use mathematical language accurately to explain the answers to problems. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics and English. Pupils listen attentively and are eager to learn.

Pupils are keen to read. They engage with high-quality fiction through books they read together as a class. They are keen to earn 'book bands' for independent reading, and leaders make regular checks on whether pupils are reading at home. Older pupils relish the opportunity to listen to younger readers at lunchtime. They speak with pride about being able to share a skill that they have and encourage others.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning for the most able pupils. Teachers use effective questioning in class to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged. They provide tailored feedback to pupils so that they know how to improve their writing further. Tasks extend pupils' learning, for example through asking pupils to compare and contrast character traits in different books that they have read. The most able pupils have frequent opportunities to extend their mathematical thinking and prove whether assertions are correct or not. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 increased in 2018 and was close to the national average.

The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection focused on improving the quality of teaching in subjects such as geography, history and science. Senior leaders have begun to develop the roles of subject leaders and have worked alongside them to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects. This has led to some improvements, such as pupils refining their evaluations at the end of design and technology projects. Subject leaders have begun to plan a curriculum which will enable pupils to build on the skills that they already have. This is not yet embedded throughout the school. Pupils do have the opportunity to build systematically on the knowledge that they have previously gained in all subjects.

Pupils and staff celebrate the diversity of the school community. Leaders work hard to establish effective communication with parents. Parents support the school through checking the multi-lingual signs around the school and helping to plan an 'International Day'. Pupils appreciate parents' presentations about cultures from around the world. They enjoy sharing the variety of languages that they speak with each other through the 'Languages Club'. They are proud to be part of a school which values different cultures, explaining, 'If there wasn't difference in the world, how would we grow and change as human beings?'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Members of the academy advisory board and the academy trust provide challenge for leaders to improve their systems further. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive appropriate support. Leaders regularly review the outcomes of referrals or concerns that teachers have to check that appropriate action has been taken and to monitor the impact of any support. Staff know what signs to be vigilant for and how to refer concerns that they might have about the well-being of pupils. They also understand the importance of checking that these concerns have been followed up.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They understand that they need to show an adult any inappropriate message that they receive on a phone. They also understand that they must not arrange to meet someone that they have only befriended over the internet. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. They know how to report any concerns and feel that staff would address their worries.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have secured strong improvements in early years. Leaders have transformed the early years base so that it is now a welcoming and inviting place to learn. Children settle quickly into routines which enable them to become independent learners. Strong systems of communication ensure that all staff know what children's next steps for learning are. Effective questioning encourages children to talk and develops the language that they use to describe what they are doing. Leaders have developed strong partnerships with parents who have regular opportunities to see what their children are learning to do and find out about what they can do to help. Children with additional needs are well supported and leaders work closely with outside agencies to improve staff knowledge further.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. Leaders ensure that teaching is of a high quality and follows a consistent approach. Regular checks are made on pupils' learning so that pupils are effectively building on what they already know. Pupils make rapid gains. The most able pupils in key stage 1 benefit from specific work on vocabulary enrichment. For example, pupils had to define 'jealous' and explain in what contexts they might experience this emotion. They used this understanding to add further expression to their reading and infer meaning from the text.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 rose sharply in 2018 and is now broadly in line with the national average. Scrutiny of current pupils' workbooks in English and mathematics indicates that pupils currently at the school, including the most able, are making strong progress.
- Work that pupils have completed in different subjects is celebrated on prominent display boards around the school. There are examples of high-quality photographs that pupils have taken, sculptures in the style of Alberto Giacometti

and striking silhouettes of Stonehenge. However, not all pupils take as much pride in their work in foundation subjects in their workbooks. They do not use their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar consistently to write as well as they can.

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is thoughtful and considerate. They walk around the school in an orderly way and hold the door open for each other. They are proud to be 'values ambassadors' and explain how important it is that they respect others in the school. They enjoy positions of responsibility, such as serving on the eco council, sports council and school council, and explain that this is a way of being democratic at their school and ensuring that everyone's views are heard.
- Leaders have adopted a rigorous approach to attendance. Pupils' attendance is systematically monitored. The school attendance officer meets with parents to help them to understand what their child is missing when they are absent and the impact that this has on their learning. Improvements in attendance are celebrated and rewarded. Pupils' attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning in science and the foundation subjects is further developed so that pupils make strong progress in all subjects across the school
- pupils present their work well in all subjects and apply their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar consistently in their work.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the L.E.A.D. multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Henson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other leaders in the school. I spoke with the chair of the academy advisory board and the director of schools for the L.E.A.D. multi-academy trust. I spoke with five members of teaching staff and the school attendance officer. I considered the views of staff who responded to the online survey. I met with a group of 12 pupils and considered the response of the school's own pupil survey. I observed learning jointly with you and other leaders throughout the school. I

scrutinised with you and senior leaders a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, improvement plan and documents related to safeguarding. I observed behaviour around the school during the day. I considered the views of parents by speaking with them before school. I analysed the school's own parental survey and the three responses to the free-text facility of Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.