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Mr Steven Wells
Headteacher
Coates Way JMI and Nursery School
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Dear Mr Wells

Short inspection of Coates Way JMI and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 December 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and governors know the school well. Together you carefully consider what could be better and put effective strategies in place to achieve your objectives. Therefore, you continue to build successfully upon the strengths of the school and address areas for development as they arise. Adults share your aspirations for pupils and vision for the school. All staff who responded to Ofsted's survey said that they are proud to work at the school and that the school is led and managed well. Pupils respond admirably to adults' high expectations, resulting in them making good progress in a range of subjects. One parent who told me, 'I find the teachers very approachable and always wanting the best for each individual child' reflected the views of many others. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, all agreed that their children are making good progress. Almost all of those who responded said that they would recommend the school.

Since the previous inspection you have provided training to support teachers' and other adults' understanding of pupils' social and emotional development. As a result, staff have tailored teaching and support programmes to better meet the needs of pupils. One example has been the introduction of celebration books for some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), resulting in improved confidence and self-image for these pupils.

Pupils are polite and well mannered, they conduct themselves well in lessons and when moving around the school. There is an air of calm around the school. Pupils learn in an environment of trust and respect. Relationships between adults and pupils are a strength

of the school and contribute strongly to pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils I spoke with told me that lessons are fun, and that they enjoy being able to choose the level of challenge. They especially enjoyed learning and performing songs from 'The Sound of Music', which I overheard during the inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school, with a tangible atmosphere of care and respect throughout. Pupils say that they feel safe and parents agree. Pupils also say that there is no bullying and that staff would help them if they were worried. Pupils have an understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They explained the software you use to safeguard them on computers in school and understand about not sharing personal information.

Leaders and governors have ensured that the school's safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You make sure that all staff know the school's safeguarding procedures and systems well. They are in no doubt about what action leaders expect them to take should they have any concerns. You make sure that staff members and the governing body complete appropriate training regularly. This means that they are up to date with the most recent published guidance and are confident to refer concerns. The designated safeguarding leader responds quickly to any concerns. When necessary, he makes referrals to external agencies promptly so that pupils and families get the help that they need.

Inspection findings

- One of my lines of enquiry to check that the school remains good was to find out if you and other leaders understand and meet the needs of small groups of pupils effectively. This was because published outcomes for pupils who attend the school show variations, over time, for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Strategies for supporting pupils with SEND are understood well by all adults working at the school. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works with pupils and teachers to identify how to meet those pupils' needs. Pupils benefit from personal programmes that focus on their social and emotional needs alongside their academic targets. Leaders take a similarly individualised approach to supporting disadvantaged pupils. They identify the things which might prevent them from learning and put targeted support in place to help them. This results in pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils making good progress from their different starting points.
- Additional adults provide effective support to pupils with SEND. These adults have good subject knowledge and ask effective questions without giving pupils the answer. Pupils are able to access the curriculum with growing independence.
- Leaders understand the needs of pupils with SEND well and provide effective support and enable them to make good progress. However, leaders and governors do not have a whole-school overview of the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, leaders and governors do not have a clear understanding of the impact of this funding on pupils' achievement in different subjects and key stages.
- Another line of enquiry was to establish whether leaders have taken effective action to improve the attendance of boys and pupils with SEND. While attendance overall is

better than the national average, attendance rates for boys and pupils with SEND are not as high as for others in the school.

- You acted decisively to improve attendance for these groups. The school has a well-established system of escalation of support for the families of pupils with low attendance. You make good use of a range of strategies to support good attendance, including breakfast club, working with families, home visits and attendance meetings. As a result, current attendance figures for these groups are improving rapidly towards that of other pupil groups in the school.
- My final line of enquiry related to middle leaders' actions to strengthen teaching, learning and assessment, so that pupils make good progress in all subjects of the curriculum. The previous inspection report recommended that middle leaders play a more strategic part in improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- Middle leaders now have a comprehensive understanding of their area of responsibility. They clearly understand the priorities for their subject and have well-developed plans in place, which have resulted in improved teaching over time. Middle leaders have a focus on the whole-school priority of vulnerable pupils and know how their actions contribute to achieving this. They have a clear understanding of how barriers to learning within their subjects can be removed for these pupils. However, leaders and middle leaders are in the process of developing the wider curriculum. They have yet to decide upon the essential knowledge and the best sequence for pupils' learning in each subject.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum clearly identifies the key knowledge that pupils should learn and that staff better understand the order in which they should learn it
- leaders' information about the allocation of pupil premium funding and its intended outcomes is sufficiently detailed to enable governors to ask more challenging and strategic questions about its impact on disadvantaged pupils' achievement in different subjects and key stages

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

Yours sincerely

John Crane
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, senior leaders, middle leaders, a representative from the local authority and two members of the governing body. With leaders, I visited all eight classes, as well as reviewing pupils' work in their books. I looked at information

about pupils' progress and reviewed documentation relating to the work of the school, including the school's self-evaluation and development planning and safeguarding arrangements. I considered the 29 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 16 responses from parents to the free-text option and the 20 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I met with a group of 12 pupils to hear their views.