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Amanda Stokes
Principal
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Dear Mrs Stokes

Short inspection of Westcliff Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

In the short time since you have been principal you have brought a clear sense of direction to the school. You are tenacious in ensuring that all pupils achieve their very best. Staff are rightly proud to work at Westcliff. It is clear that you relish the opportunity to lead the school, and with the support of the deputy principal and executive principal you have been tireless in your work to maintain high standards.

During their time at Westcliff pupils make good progress. Children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age and by the end of Year 6 a higher percentage than the national average leave school at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. However, we agreed that the teaching of reading could be further improved.

Leaders have established a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils study a range of subjects and topics. However, as you are aware, there are missed opportunities to make the curriculum exciting. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic about school, but they do not always talk about rich, memorable experiences linked to their topic work.

Behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and get along well

together. Pupils are proud of their school, they say there is no bullying and if there were to be any, they are confident that teachers would deal with it.

Relationships with parents are strong. A large number of parents commented that they were very happy with the education that the school provides. A typical comment from a parent was: 'This is an excellent school, which my child loves going to every day.'

Leaders, including governors have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teaching has improved as staff receive appropriate training and support to help them develop in their roles. Mathematics teaching is good, particularly in key stage 2, and pupils grow in confidence to reason and problem-solve with numbers.

Inspectors also asked leaders to improve the clarity of the school's development plan to gain a sharper picture of how well the school is doing. In response the role of subject leaders has strengthened, and they now monitor and evaluate their subject. As a result, they have a better understanding of the aspects needing attention. Leaders use all the information available to draw up a development plan that has precise targets and success is easily measured.

Governors work hard for the school. They have improved their evaluation skills since the last inspection and are now much better at holding you and other senior leaders to account for the work you do.

Safeguarding is effective.

The deputy principal leads safeguarding effectively. Policies and procedures are all in place and staff receive timely and appropriate training so they all understand their responsibility to keep all pupils safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They understand that if they are worried or anxious there is always someone in school to help them. In addition, pupils display a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed some key lines of enquiry. Firstly, we discussed the steep and rapid rise in achievement in early years over the last few years. You rightly identified that in 2014 and 2015, early years results did not represent a true picture of attainment at Westcliff as they included the results of children at a partner school. This is no longer the case. Results now reflect only the performance of children at Westcliff. The early years is a particular strength of the school. Children enjoy a range of opportunities and make good progress. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age and in 2017 moved into Year 1 with skills and knowledge well above the national average. Teachers in early years have a detailed understanding of the needs of this age range and they make learning exciting. This area of the school is led

well, because staff receive effective and timely training and they have access to a range of resources.

- We also looked at the performance of boys in key stage 1. Current school assessment information shows that there is no real difference between the performance of boys and girls. In 2017, test results show that boys in Year 2 achieved above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Lastly, we looked at the discrepancy between pupils' performance in reading and their performance in writing. Data showed that pupils across the school consistently achieved better in writing than in reading. The teaching of writing is highly effective. Pupils are given the opportunity to write at length and with sustained concentration. Results from national tests show that pupils make good progress in writing. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is above national average, and the gap between reading and writing narrowed in 2017 national tests. However, the teaching of reading is not as effective as the teaching of writing. Teachers do not plan to teach reading systematically. Assessment of reading is not robust enough to provide teachers with a precise understanding of pupils' progress and ensure that books are sufficiently challenging.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a systematic approach to the teaching and assessment of reading so that pupils make even better progress.
- the curriculum offers rich and memorable experiences in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Blackpool. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Emma Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and other members of staff, including the deputy principal and executive principal. I also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the executive board. I met with pupils in a meeting and met with some parents as they collected their children.

I took account of responses to the online questionnaires for parents and staff. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress and attainment. I scrutinised the

school's self-evaluation document and school improvement plan and looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.