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Mrs Sandra Renwick
Headteacher
Wood Ley Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Renwick

Short inspection of Wood Ley Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 February 2016, 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. A period of significant change has been managed well by the leadership team and the governing body, past and present. It is testament to everyone's hard work and the leadership qualities of senior staff that the transition to a primary school has gone well.

When the previous headteacher left, at the end of the last academic year, the school was in good shape. Nevertheless, you knew that there were things that needed to improve further and you have successfully stamped your own style on school development. Staff have wholeheartedly embraced your ambitions and made them their own. Staff morale is high and you and the new deputy headteacher have successfully taken staff to a higher level of performance, particularly for assessment and the curriculum.

You are known for your attention to detail and for being well organised. Staff at all levels of responsibility like this. They know where they stand and respect you for finding out what it is like for them in their work. Staff particularly welcome the way that you involve them fully in making decisions.

You make sure that staff are outward-looking. Training and reflection are key to the way that the senior leadership team works with staff. Traditional ways of working are challenged and new ways are adopted in pursuit of good practice. For example,

additional support for pupils who need to catch up is tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. Staff are confident to try new things and feel well supported.

At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership team was asked to improve teachers' use of assessment to plan pupils' learning. This aspect of the school's work has improved, particularly under your leadership, so that staff understand and use the system for tracking pupils' assessments effectively. Reviews of pupils' performance in each class are now routine and frequent features of teachers' work.

Extending leaders' roles and responsibilities was highlighted for improvement in the previous inspection report. Since your appointments, you and the deputy headteacher have developed the roles of subject leaders and the special needs coordinator. Although it is still early days for them to play a full part in school development, subject leaders already have a firm grasp of their subjects and the special needs coordinator has a clear understanding of what works best.

It is not only the staff that have changed their practice; so too has the governing body. In the autumn term of 2015, the governing body found itself in need of several new members. In the same way that you and the staff embraced the opportunity for change, the governing body took the chance to reflect on how they go about their business. As with staff, the changes were supported through training. As a result, new members, some of whom have taken on significant responsibilities, bring renewed vigour and rigour to the governing body's work, and have hit the ground running.

Given the ambition of staff and the governing body, it is no surprise that pupils are confident learners and that parents are equally confident in the leadership of the school. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) are positive about the school. A few are critical about communication from staff about what how well the pupils are doing. You recognised this soon after taking the headship and have put a range of opportunities in place for parents to be informed and to get involved.

It is clear from talking with pupils, watching them in class and looking at their work that they enjoy learning very much. They arrive on time in the mornings, are ready to start work promptly and take responsibility to complete their work as best they can by themselves. Pupils are proud to have their work on display in class and in corridors. Visitors cannot fail to see that reading, writing and art work are valued and celebrated. At breaktimes, pupils of all ages play well together. Older pupils often go out of their way to support younger ones.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team makes sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are well informed about a wide range of relevant issues for keeping

children safe. This includes the recent training for 'Prevent'. The governing body plays an active part in checking the school's arrangements. Governors are well trained and, in order to maintain their high levels of vigilance, are about to set up a working party to share their safeguarding responsibilities more widely.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and pupils' performance. There is a clear line of sight from what pupils can do by the end of each year to the leadership team's judgements on the quality of each aspect of the school's work. But by focusing on attainment as the main measure of success, the leadership team is not making the best use of the information available about pupils' progress.
- Pupils' achievements at the end of the Reception Year, in the phonic check in Year 1 and at the end of Year 2 show an improving trend towards standards that are at least in line with national averages. This trend is also seen in the achievement of pupils in other years as they move through the school.
- Additional funding is spent appropriately to support the pupils for whom it is intended. The leadership team make sure that the funding is used effectively according to pupils' individual needs and circumstances. As a consequence, they achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- The cycle of checking and evaluating what pupils can do has become increasingly systematic and efficient. As a result, staff have the information they need to plan pupils' work effectively. Currently, this is working particularly well to identify the gaps in learning for those pupils whose learning was interrupted by changes in their class teacher in the past.
- Staff apply the school's marking policy effectively and this works well to encourage pupils to take responsibility for improving their work. Pupils can explain what they have learned, how they have found out new things and how they can use their developing knowledge.
- There is a lot of work in pupils' books but sometimes the use of worksheets stifles pupils' ability to record in sufficient detail what they know and can do. This is particularly the case in the books of older pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new assessment system is refined to include clear measures of pupils' progress from their individual starting points
- subject leaders play a full part in checking and reporting on the quality of pupils' performance in each subject

- older pupils are expected to learn and use the appropriate skills for recording and presenting their work.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the special needs coordinator, three governors, the office manager and the staff. I had a conversation on the telephone with a representative from the local authority. I observed and spoke with pupils as they arrived in the morning, in lessons and at breaktimes. Pupils' work was scrutinised. Thirty-two parents and 21 staff responded to Ofsted's questionnaire; 20 parents and five staff gave written comments. There were no responses to the pupils' online questionnaire. I spoke with pupils throughout the day to gain their views and looked at the school's most recent pupil questionnaire. Documentation was analysed regarding pupils' performance.