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Mr Iain Paterson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Paterson

Short inspection of Woodlands School

Following my visit to the school with Rowena Green, Ofsted Inspector, on 4 May 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders and governors have maintained the good quality of education in the school. This school is well led. You, along with other leaders, staff, governors, pupils and parents, have created a positive and ambitious culture within the school. You have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report and you have taken action to improve the school further.

You have used your clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring development to improve the school. For example, through close analysis of the quality of teaching and its impact upon pupil progress, you have supported teachers to improve their practice and reorganised the staffing in order to secure better teaching. This has led to improvements in the secondary phase so the quality of teaching and resultant outcomes are now similar to those found elsewhere in the school. However, some inconsistencies remain.

Staff throughout the school have benefited from effective training, informed by leaders' knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and teaching assistants, to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, most staff are now planning to meet the individual needs of pupils and, as you have also invested in additional resources that match pupils' abilities, progress continues to improve in every key stage.

Since the last inspection, you have taken informed action to devise more exciting and relevant opportunities for all pupils to enjoy during the lunch break and at other

times. You have improved the outdoor area so that all pupils, including wheelchair users, can use it for learning and play. For example, the secondary playground has a wheelchair accessible roundabout, swing and sunken trampoline and pupils of all ages can access a climbing wall, chalk boards, giant draughts and table-tennis equipment. Pupils attend the 'care farm' on a regular basis. They told inspectors that they enjoy seeing the animals in the 'Woodland Walk' area and the sixth-form students learn in the horticultural area. The outside area is now used extremely well to develop pupils' understanding and skills.

Pupils are happy in school. They are well cared for and safe. They trust the staff they learn with and they are welcoming to visitors. They were keen to show their work to the inspectors and they are polite and considerate of others. They behave exceptionally well inside and outside of their classrooms and they were very respectful during a memorial event that took place during the inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a culture for keeping children safe and leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are regularly reviewed and understood by all staff. A number of staff are fully trained to take responsibility for safeguarding in different areas of the school and staff are clear about what they should do if a concern arises.

Established routines are in place to keep children safe in the school, including in the early years provision and the sixth form. Thorough and well-maintained safeguarding checks are updated regularly and clear policies, which make reference to the most recent guidance, are implemented well. Staff have received up-to-date information and training about keeping children safe, so prompt action is taken if required.

Staff work well with outside agencies. They make timely referrals to the appropriate local authority officers and follow up concerns appropriately. Children missing in education protocols are followed routinely and records are well kept and secure.

Staff have also had training on relevant issues such as preventing extremism and child sexual exploitation. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in ways that are age-appropriate. They have learned about a range of topics, including e-safety, and they told inspectors that they feel safe in the school. The vast majority of staff and parents who made their views known to inspectors agreed that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders know the school well. Senior leaders and governors have high expectations of staff and pupils and demonstrate the capacity to improve the school further.
- Leadership at all levels is being developed in order to improve the quality of education in the school. The early years provision and the sixth form are led well and new leaders with responsibility for improving teaching and learning are having a positive impact.

- The arrangements for managing staff performance are very effective. Staff are set appropriate targets linked to the impact teaching is having on pupil progress and their own professional development. Training and improvement are actively encouraged.
- There are examples of high-quality teaching in the school but this is not yet consistent. Most teaching is well planned, develops pupils' communication skills and is lively and engaging. Signing and visual timetables are used effectively and relationships are positive throughout the school.
- Pupils work well with each other and with a range of staff. There is a clear team ethos and teachers, teaching assistants, care assistants and care enablers work very well together to the benefit of the pupils.
- Teachers usually set tasks that are relevant to the age, interests and ability of the pupils and questions are often used well to develop understanding. However, where teaching is weaker, learning is not planned to meet the different abilities of those in the class. As a result, it does not provide appropriate stretch and challenge for the most-able pupils, particularly those with moderate learning difficulties. Understanding is not consolidated for those who need it before the lesson moves on and misconceptions are not challenged. Weaker teaching also gives pupils few opportunities to explore ideas or objects and find things out for themselves.
- Where teaching has weaknesses, leaders have put support in place in order to secure improvement. Good and outstanding practice is shared across the school and staff have taken opportunities to watch the best practitioners teach. As a result of this, the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Information provided by the school indicates that the vast majority of current pupils are making at least good progress. The accuracy of this information has been checked through consultation with colleagues in school and beyond.
- Assessment information also indicates that pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress from their starting points as other pupils in the school. Boys continue to make rapid progress but girls are catching up with them.
- The very strong progress in early years, key stage 1 and 2 and in the sixth form has been maintained and, where progress in the secondary phase has needed to improve, effective action has led to positive outcomes. This is particularly evident in key stage 3, where a focus on improving teaching has led to better progress for pupils.
- Leaders have taken action to improve outcomes in art, computing and science in key stage 4 and they are aware that the good progress in mathematics in key stage 2 has not matched the accelerated progress in reading and writing. Once again, they are taking effective action to address this.
- The curriculum currently leads to good outcomes and classroom learning is supported by a number of enrichment activities. School leaders plan to develop the curriculum further so that it nurtures employability skills and helps to prepare pupils well for adult life.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and their understanding of fundamental British values are promoted effectively. Tolerance and respect are fundamental to the values the school upholds. Pupils learn about right and wrong,

they vote in school elections and they are encouraged to make choices. Kindness is celebrated in the school.

- Staff promote equality of opportunity and diversity exceptionally well. Pupils learn about major world religions and they are accepting of others. Pupils, staff and parents indicated that bullying is rare and they are confident that any unkindness would be dealt with quickly and effectively if it happened.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in class and during social times. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff and each other and older pupils take care of younger children, both informally and formally by being mentors.
- Leaders value the views of pupils. This is evident through the annual pupil questionnaire which informs action in the school. For example, the opinions of pupils made a significant contribution to the development of the outdoor area around the school.
- Clear behaviour management strategies are used well by staff and they are understood by the pupils. Incidents of poor behaviour have declined since the last inspection and there have been no exclusions in the last three years.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection. Staff work closely with families to promote regular attendance but illness resulted in a dip in attendance last term.
- School staff work well with parents. They are welcomed in school and attend a range of events. As a result, almost all parents who made their views known to inspectors are very positive about the school. They value the close working relationship with staff and feel that their children are well taught, make good progress, behave well and are safe.
- Children in the early years enjoy high-quality teaching in a safe and stimulating environment. The range of subjects provides varied and imaginative experiences leading to rapid rates of progress.
- Since the last inspection, students have made at least good progress in the sixth form. In common with pupils in key stage 4, they have completed a range of accredited courses and enrichment activities. The curriculum is focused on developing skills in personal and social development, employability, independence and transition. As a result of this, almost all students have moved onto further education or appropriate settings.
- Additional funding is used effectively. Pupil premium provides additional support, resources and activities which have led to improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Sport funding has been used to increase participation rates in a range of sporting and physical activities and Year 7 catch-up funding has led to improvements in reading and writing.
- A range of interventions are used in the school and all are evaluated individually. School leaders are planning a more holistic approach to this so they have a clear overview of what each individual and group receive, how these actions work together and what impact they are having.
- The school website is relatively new and contains some relevant information. However, it is not an accurate reflection of the school and it does not contain all the information that it should present. For example, the curriculum information is

not up to date, admissions information is missing, there is no celebration of last year's outcomes and it does not provide a link to the local offer.

- The governing body has provided appropriate support and challenge to the headteacher. Governors have an appropriate range of skills, knowledge and understanding and have taken opportunities to develop these further. They are committed to the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and perform their statutory duties effectively.
- The advisor formerly commissioned by the local authority to provide support and challenge to the school did this most effectively. He had a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provided reports which leaders acted upon to improve the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teaching throughout the school is consistently of the highest standard so that pupils make outstanding progress in every key stage
- the website contains all the required information and is a true reflection of the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the Interim Strategic Director of People Group for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, other leaders, two governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority. We met with a group of staff and a group of pupils and made 13 short visits to lessons with one of the deputy headteachers. We considered parental opinion through 23 responses and 16 comments made on Parent View and also looked at the school's parental survey. We evaluated information on pupils' progress and scrutinised other records about keeping pupils safe, their behaviour and attendance. I also looked at minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, external reports, staff training records and information about managing teachers' performance.