

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Linda Taylor  
Executive Headteacher  
Wingham Primary School  
School Lane  
Wingham  
Canterbury  
Kent  
CT3 1BD

Dear Linda Taylor

### **Short inspection of Wingham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 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 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has improved the good quality of education in the school seen during the last inspection. You, your staff and governors have a clear vision for the school that promotes the achievement of every pupil within a caring community, built on mutual respect. Since September 2013, Wingham Primary School has benefited from the federated partnership with Preston Primary School. The federation's senior leadership team consists of you, as executive headteacher with oversight of both schools, the head of each school and the federation inclusion leader. This team demonstrates strong leadership and shows good capacity to improve the school further. As executive headteacher, your cheerful and relentless determination to drive the school forward inspires other leaders and school staff. You skilfully enable the heads of the two schools to take responsibility for the day-to-day running of each school, and also show a passion for strengthening teaching and learning across the federation. Senior and subject leaders have found the challenge and support offered by their equivalent colleagues at Preston School both invigorating and reassuring.

The school has improved since the last inspection because you, school leaders and governors use your accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school to prioritise actions to take. Leaders set out to systematically address aspects of the school which could be even better. Following the previous inspection, leaders took effective action to strengthen teaching throughout the school and particularly in key stage 2. Staffing is stable, and well-targeted professional development

enables staff to develop their subject knowledge and teaching skills. For example, at the end of 2015, you identified that pupils' writing was not as strong as their reading. During the last academic year, you ran a programme of training, supported effectively by a local authority adviser, and introduced new activities to encourage pupils to write more fluently. As a result, provisional 2016 key stage 2 results show that pupils' progress in writing is well above national levels. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above national levels at both key stages 1 and 2. The proportions of Year 1 pupils meeting the phonics check and children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception Year are also above national levels. Outcomes at the school are consistently high. You have analysed the 2016 results thoroughly and are already effectively tackling the need to improve performance at the higher levels in mathematics.

Since the previous inspection, you have introduced a new, topic-based curriculum and are particularly proud of the innovative way different subjects blend together to support learning. For example, in Reception Year, children created art work based on the work of the artist Piet Mondrian to help their understanding of different shapes. Subject leaders across the curriculum are enthused by pupils' responses to problem-solving and open-ended assessment tasks which allow pupils to demonstrate their thinking and ability to apply the skills they have learned. All leaders acknowledge that they now need to thoroughly evaluate the impact of this approach on pupils' progress.

Assessment of pupils' attainment is regular and analysed thoroughly. When pupils are in danger of falling behind, prompt and effective action is taken to help them catch up. Leaders, teachers and teaching assistants review the progress of individuals carefully. However, the performance of groups of pupils, such as the most able and disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is less well understood. The federation improvement plan does not identify targets or milestones for groups of pupils, which makes it difficult for governors to hold school leaders to account for the actions they have taken to improve the progress of these pupils. Similarly, overall targets within the plan are imprecise and do not meet the same high expectations shown by governors and school leaders in discussion.

Pupils continue to behave well throughout the school, enjoy lessons and work cooperatively. A large majority of pupils expressed support for the school, but a few parents are dissatisfied with the way leaders meet their children's needs.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that a culture of safeguarding permeates the school. Your safeguarding policy draws on current guidance and is personalised for the schools in the federation. It explains clearly how all members of the community are responsible for safeguarding. Staff training is up to date. Detailed and high-quality records show that any concerns about pupils are followed up rapidly and school leaders work well with other agencies to help pupils and families receive the support they need.

## Inspection findings

- Governors share your ambition for the school to become outstanding and the quality of governance is strong. Governors have wide experience and relevant expertise, which enables them to provide good support as well as the healthy degree of challenge required of all governing bodies. Visits are frequent so governors can monitor actions taken, and they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The newly appointed chair and vice-chair of the governing body are astute and are starting to strengthen governance even further.
- School leaders at all levels are justifiably proud of the improvements they have led at the school since the last inspection. There is a high level of monitoring to check that planned actions have taken place and that required changes have been made. Having established a new curriculum and new forms of assessment in the school, leaders are now, rightly, focusing on evaluating the impact of the steps they have taken.
- Leaders regularly seek new ideas and external verification of their judgements by visiting other schools and welcoming feedback from external visitors, including the local authority adviser. Leaders experience useful challenge and support from colleagues in a local consortium of schools, including moderation of pupils' work.
- During my visits to classrooms to observe learning, the head of school explained clearly the steps taken to develop staff and improve the quality of their practice. This, and other activities, showed me that leaders accurately identify strengths and areas for development, provide high-quality training and hold staff to account robustly.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. They know what is expected of their learning and behaviour. We saw children in the early years and pupils in all other years responding well to adults' encouraging approach.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including learning outdoors. Year 6 pupils recently completed a 'survival week' which developed skills to prepare them well for their next steps in education. They are currently writing about their experiences with relish.
- The curriculum has been broadened to include a greater focus on diversity and preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. The visit of the Paralympic torch to the school last summer was clearly a highlight and demonstrates the school's celebration of differences and commitment to equality.
- The teaching I saw across the school was purposeful and clear. The school's information about pupils' performance and work in books show that pupils are progressing well, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The most able pupils are starting to experience greater challenge, especially through reasoning in mathematics, although this is not yet consistent across the school.

- Tracking information shows close attention to the performance of every pupil in the school. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved since the arrival of the inclusion leader in April 2015. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress due to strong teaching and effective interventions. School leaders do not track the performance of most-able pupils as a group and this makes it more difficult to evaluate the impact of actions taken to provide extra stretch and challenge for these pupils.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement planning sets precise success criteria for pupils' progress, particularly by groups, including the most able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- all groups of pupils make good progress in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I visited lessons in all year groups in the school, jointly with the head of school. I listened to some pupils read and looked at some of their work. I met with the executive headteacher, heads of school from both Wingham and Preston schools, the inclusion leader and four subject leaders. I also met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I took careful account of 29 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and conversations with parents waiting to collect their children from school. I looked at documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' learning and progress, minutes of meetings and records regarding safeguarding and attendance.

These inspection activities were employed to gather evidence against the following lines of enquiry arising from pre-inspection analysis:

- How well are disadvantaged pupils progressing, including the most able?
- Is work challenging enough, especially in mathematics?
- How strong is the leadership of the school and how well have leaders responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection?