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Dear Mrs Gaiteri

### **Short inspection of Wormley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 September 2011.

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

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

You have led the school effectively since you took up the post of headteacher in January 2014. On joining the school you quickly identified and celebrated the many strengths in the school. Equally, you rapidly implemented many changes that have secured further development to ensure that the school continues to quickly move forward. As a result, standards are continually rising.

Your school motto 'have faith, show respect, take responsibility and achieve' is being lived out by all. In your leadership you role-model resilience and being resourceful and reflective. This is mirrored by your team and pupils alike, and has recently been verified in the school's outstanding Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodists Schools (SIAMS) inspection judgement.

You continue to improve the quality of teaching through staff training. Your training programme allows staff to improve their skills, develop specialisms in different aspects of education, and to be able to contribute to the school improvement and provision. Your staff use this training determinedly to improve the provision for pupils.

Securing good teaching at the school has made a difference to the achievement of all pupils. The proportion of pupils attaining the national average by the time they

leave Year 6 is the same as their peers nationally for reading, writing and mathematics. Your school's current analysis of their own assessment information shows that pupils are making good progress in reading and mathematics, and there are more pupils on course to meet the expected standard and exceed it.

Pupils' achievement in writing continues to improve across the school. These improvements can be seen most notably by the end of key stage 2, where in 2016 the proportion of those achieving the higher standard in writing was above the national average. You acknowledge that while writing is improving across the school, pupils still require further opportunities to apply their skills in their own independent writing. You are approaching the teaching of writing in a different way this academic year. This consists of pupils developing key skills linked to drama, speaking and listening, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Leaders also acknowledge that they need to seek a more systematic way of evaluating pupils' writing development across the curriculum.

You use the school environment skilfully. Displays are attractive and provide pupils with many prompts that they use to help them with their work. For example, one pupil said, 'I use the word wall in my classroom all the time to give me ideas about what words to use in my writing, then I use a dictionary to find an even better word to use.' You have also created some quiet, calm places for pupils to have time to think, and space for them to work in a way that helps them learn best.

Wormley Primary School is a place pupils want to be and one that parents highly recommend to others. Pupils and parents are effusive in their praise for the dedication of the staff. One pupil explained that: 'All adults try so hard to make sure they bring good, unique ideas to the classrooms to make it better for us so we do better with our learning. It works because I am so interested in everything I do and now I am doing better every day I come to school.' Pupils describe their school as 'challenging', 'epic', 'amazing' and 'a great place to be'. Parents compliment the commitment and hard work of staff and how this enthuses their children to want to be in school and learn. One parent said: 'Wormley School is a place where my children are excited and keen to go every morning. Staff always have fresh ideas. Children are enthused and encouraged in their learning. I have seen my children's confidence and characters blossom under excellent teaching.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and staff ensure that safeguarding is a priority at Wormley Primary School. You and the governors prioritise safeguarding when recruiting staff. You make sure that all statutory checks are thoroughly completed. Staff training ensures that they have a good knowledge and understanding of the potential safeguarding issues which pupils may be susceptible to. All staff use the recording systems in place effectively and leaders follow these up rigorously. As a result, pupils are well looked after and kept very safe.

The curriculum is effective in helping pupils understand danger and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and know the

risks when using the internet. They were able to give appropriate responses to scenarios that show their awareness and their mature attitude in dealing with concerns or anything that may cause them to feel at risk.

There are very few incidents relating to bullying, and when they do occur, they are investigated thoroughly. Pupils confirm that the few incidents that do occur are resolved between pupils by the school's 'buddy' system. Additionally, pupils reported that disputes were usually 'over silly things' and 'it is never anything to do with people having a different religion or different colour of skin'. Pupils commonly agree that 'everyone is treated the same, whatever we believe or our differences'.

## **Inspection findings**

- You and other leaders know your school well. You accurately evaluate the overall effectiveness of the school's provision. You, governors and other leaders are not complacent and recognise that the school can be even better. You listen to the views of the staff carefully and this has enabled you to continue to identify shrewdly the ways in which you can improve the school further. However, you acknowledge that leaders do not consistently use the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning as effectively as they could.
- Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement recommended at the previous inspection. In early years, all staff are using accurate day-to-day assessments effectively to plan activities that support children well. As a result, young children are making good progress from their varying low starting points and are being well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The new assessment system is being used effectively by leaders and teachers. There is a range of monitoring activities within the school to check that assessments are accurate. In addition, you use external cluster meetings with other schools to further verify your assessments. Leaders use this information to plan support and intervention for pupils. Teachers use the information effectively to plan work that builds on pupils' previous skills and knowledge. Consequently, pupils are making more rapid progress from their starting points.
- All leaders are very firm in the belief that early intervention will secure better provision for pupils. With this in mind, you purposefully deploy resources and the support of external agencies to the youngest children. For example, you know from your own baseline assessment information that children are entering Reception with literacy skills that are below those typical for children of the same age. You commission bespoke speech and language support to provide early help. As a result, children are acquiring language skills quickly that they are successfully applying to other aspects of their work.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Teachers work very closely with learning support assistants to ensure that the progress these pupils make in each session is recorded. This individually targeted support results in pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progressing well from their various starting points.
- Teachers ensure that the planning of the curriculum meets the needs of the most able, including those who are disadvantaged, with well-planned activities that challenge them and enable them to use and apply their knowledge. Additional

challenge tasks in lessons are used effectively so that pupils have the opportunity to choose to extend and apply their learning. For example, in mathematics there is evidence in books that these pupils use their reasoning skills and show resilience in their approach to tricky mathematical concepts when problem-solving.

- The pupil premium funding is spent astutely and its effectiveness is evaluated frequently. Leaders detail this very succinctly in their pupil premium strategy. A high proportion of disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders take on a holistic approach to the pupils' varying needs involving a range of external agencies and specialist expertise. Leaders prudently assess the barriers to learning and commission support that is effective in helping them to access their work more easily. Consequently, the disadvantaged pupils' attainment is improving and the differences between the achievement of these pupils, and other pupils nationally, are diminishing more and more.
- A large proportion of children enter Reception with skills lower than is typical for children of the same age. However, children make good progress from their starting points and the number achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception is typically in line with the national average. This is because staff routinely assess children using a variety of methods that, put together, contribute to building up an accurate picture of each child's learning journey. They use this information methodically to plan activities and give the children opportunities that ensure that they can make good progress.
- You have a determined approach to ensuring that the pupils' academic, social and welfare needs are met at your school through providing an environment that is inclusive. You lead by example and promote the ethos of the school through your actions, showing pride and interest in the pupils and staff at your school.
- You identified that the attendance of your pupils was not good enough in 2014/15, especially for those who are the most vulnerable. You acted swiftly to address this through more intense monitoring, and closer work with the local authority. Consequently, in 2015/16 attendance improved, and the numbers of pupils who were persistently absent reduced considerably.

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

Leaders, and those responsible for governance, should ensure that:

- they sharpen some of their monitoring around the quality of teaching so that they can fully evaluate the difference their work makes more effectively
- they plan more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Fielding  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Information about the inspection

I reviewed a number of key lines of enquiry as part of this inspection:

- safeguarding culture and ethos of the school
- the quality of teaching and learning and how this is further improving
- how leaders are monitoring the progress of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- how leaders are securing improved progress for all pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics
- how effective the newly-implemented assessment systems are in measuring the progress and attainment of pupils, including in early years, and how this informs teaching so that it makes a difference to the progress being achieved by all pupils.

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. I also met with three governors, including the chair. A representative of the local authority attended the final feedback meeting. We visited all of the classes during the day to observe the quality of teaching and learning, and looked at a range of pupils' books, including those belonging to disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most able pupils. I met with groups of pupils and heard some pupils read. I looked at a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, attendance, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I also took account of 61 free-text responses from parents, the 75 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and also the recent school survey of parents' views. I also considered a response to the pupil questionnaire and 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.