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Mrs Marie Thomas  
Headteacher  
Wellington Primary School  
Wellington  
Herefordshire  
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Dear Mrs Thomas

### **Short inspection of Wellington Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 September 2012.

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

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since taking over the headship of the school in September 2016 you have continued to secure improvements ensuring that Wellington Primary School remains a purposeful, exciting place in which to learn.

You have an insightful, accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development and an ambitious drive for excellence. Consequently, you have focused on the correct improvement priorities and taken decisive, effective action to address areas of weakness. For example, you identified the need to improve the children's pre-school provision. You have secured this by bringing the nursery 'in-house', ensuring that children get off to a really strong start. The impact of this can already be seen in the progress being made by the children in the nursery.

Your improvement priorities are sharply focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all key stages. As a result, standards continue to improve and pupils' progress is accelerating.

You and your staff have taken effective steps to address the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. You have ensured that performance management targets set for teachers are appropriate and challenging. These targets are set in line with the school development plan which ensures that

school improvement targets are met. You introduced a new handwriting scheme, which you have implemented from Reception, to improve the presentation of pupils' work. The impact of this can be clearly seen in pupils' written work from Reception through to Year 6.

Wellington Primary School is a small school and the number of pupils in each year group varies significantly. This makes it difficult to identify trends in the amount of progress made by pupils, and the standards they reach. However, the assessment system you have set up enables you to track and monitor the progress and attainment of all pupils individually. You and your teachers use this information very effectively to monitor the impact of teaching and learning across school.

For the last two years, the percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has dipped to below the national figure. You recognised this and have identified reasons why this happened. As a result of the actions you have taken, far more pupils are now expected to meet the expected standard for reading at the end of Year 1.

The curriculum offered by the school is broad and balanced. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of activities including forest school, cookery, learning how to look after their finances and a residential visit in Class 4.

The school motto, 'working together to succeed' is evidenced by the strong relationships that exist. Pupils are very respectful of each other and adults. Staff work together as a team and know their children well. Parents value the strong relationships and commitment by all staff to promote the well-being of pupils. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and work hard to achieve their best. They are extremely polite and well-mannered and conduct around the school is excellent. They say they are happy, feel safe and enjoy their learning. Pupils say that bullying 'doesn't happen very often', and they are confident that it is quickly and effectively dealt with when it does happen. The peer mediation system works particularly well. It encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to behave well and treat each other with respect. Peer mediators take their role extremely seriously and the system is greatly valued by pupils and staff.

The majority of parents who expressed their views are supportive and appreciative of the school. They particularly value the school's caring ethos and the approachability of teaching staff. However, results from the parent questionnaire show that there are some mixed views, particularly around the quality of communication and how the school responds to concerns.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements and the school website contains comprehensive information. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. Appropriate procedures are followed for the recruitment of staff. The checks

on staff's suitability to work with children are thorough and detailed. You have established a strong safeguarding culture and staff have undertaken appropriate, up-to-date training. Staff are knowledgeable about the school's safeguarding procedures and recognise that they have a collective responsibility to keep pupils safe. Parents who expressed their views overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe in school. The school's system for reporting concerns is used appropriately by staff and this enables you to support vulnerable pupils and their families well. You access support and advice from external agencies quickly. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe from a range of potential dangers, for example, carrying out a 'safety sweep' of the forest school area at the beginning of each session. Pupils also learn about road safety, water safety and first aid. The children I spoke to had a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online, both in school and at home. The school's computers have appropriate filtering systems in place. A safeguarding audit was scheduled to be carried out shortly after the inspection.

### **Inspection findings**

- You use attendance information well to track and monitor the attendance of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Using this information, you have been able to support some families to improve their child's attendance very successfully. However, there are still a small number of pupils who do not attend regularly enough. In some cases, this is with good reason, but not always. Overall attendance is still currently just below national average so more still needs to be done to support some families.
- The decline in the percentage of pupils meeting the phonics standard at the end of Year 1 has been stemmed. This is as a result of the actions you have taken including further staff training, using an additional adult to support particular pupils and reorganising phonics learning groups to match individual pupils' needs. As a result of these actions the proportion of pupils on track to reach the standard has increased considerably. The children I heard read from Years 2 and 3 were able to use their phonics strategies well to read unfamiliar words.
- Your commitment to improving the learning experiences of every individual pupil is evident. This is resulting in improved and accelerated progress for pupils across the school. You have developed a coherent system of assessment which is used well to track and monitor individual pupils' progress and the progress of groups. This helps you to quickly identify children who may be falling behind and to put interventions in place.
- Historically children entered Reception with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age. Children in Reception make strong progress from their individual starting points. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development is greater than the national average. They are ready and well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 did not perform as well as other pupils in the school. You have analysed the reasons for this and were able to articulate these clearly. The school's assessment information for pupils currently in school shows that the vast majority of pupils are making at least good

progress towards achieving their required outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. A number of pupils are making better than good progress. Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress and are keeping up with their peers. Almost all disadvantaged pupils are making at least good progress.

- You have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. You have high expectations of teachers and have effectively improved the quality of provision. You acknowledge some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across school and have plans in place to remedy this.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Work in the pupils' topic books covers a variety of topics. Pupils take part in a wide range of events to celebrate 'Britishness', for example harvest festival, British food fortnight and celebrating saints' days. Pupils also take part in a range of activities that help them to learn about other cultures and religions, for example religious celebrations, Chinese new year, Black history month and World Religion Day. Leaders are now exploring further ways of ensuring that the curriculum helps pupils to gain a stronger understanding of British values.
- You and the governors have taken steps to gather parental views and have recently set up a parents' forum to strengthen engagement with parents and to involve them in decision-making. In addition, you have put in place numerous strategies to encourage parents to engage with school, for example newsletters, and use of social media.
- The majority of parents who expressed their views are supportive and appreciative of the school. They particularly value the school's caring ethos and the approachability of you and your teaching staff. Many parents were confident that any issues they had were quickly dealt with. You have carried out parent surveys and these show 100% satisfaction with the school. However, in the responses to Parent View, a small proportion of parents express some dissatisfaction with aspects of communication. For example, a few parents think they do not get enough information about how well their children are doing at school. Others do not feel that the school responds to concerns. During this inspection, I shared these concerns with you. In response, leaders are looking into ways to improve the flow of information further and to understand why some parents have these views.
- You have supported the governors well, enabling them to develop the skills necessary to challenge you and hold you to account. The governors now need to undertake further training to help them understand what information is available to them and what this information is telling them about their school. This will enable governors to be confident in their ability to independently hold leaders to account and play a greater part in determining the strategic direction of the school.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors further strengthen their skills to enable them to play a more strategic role in school improvement and to confidently challenge school leaders
- all practice is as strong as the best in the school so that all pupils do the best they can and reach the standards of which they are capable
- they develop further ways to engage with all parents so that all parents say they feel informed about and involved in their child's education.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Satchwell  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I carried out the following activities:

- met with senior leaders to review the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and to agree the lines of enquiry for the inspection
- conducted a learning walk throughout the school with you looking at work in pupils' books, speaking to pupils and observing learning
- spoke to pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 and listened to Year 2 and 3 pupils read
- carried out a scrutiny of pupils' books across the school
- met with leaders to discuss assessment and attendance information
- met with a representative of the governing body and spoke with the school's improvement adviser
- carried out safeguarding checks including checks on the school's single central record and the steps followed when recruiting new members of staff
- met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss work with external agencies and how the school supports vulnerable children and their families
- scrutinised a wide range of documentation including the school website, governors' minutes, behaviour and bullying logs, teaching records, the school's self-evaluation form, school improvement priorities, training records and child protection files

- met with parents before school and reviewed the internal parent survey conducted by the school
- reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire, responses to Ofsted's freetext, the responses to the staff survey and the responses to the pupil survey.