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Miss Karen Webster  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Webster

### **Short inspection of Woodlands CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 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 February 2013.

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

You have successfully reversed a decline in the quality of education at the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2015, and over the last year in particular, you have brought about an improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. You have set suitably high standards for staff and pupils and pointed everyone in the right direction. It was a pleasure to spend a day in a stimulating and inviting school environment and to talk with, and listen to, confident, articulate, polite and respectful pupils.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified two main areas for improvement. The first was to raise standards in writing to match those in reading and mathematics. The second was to strengthen teaching generally, to quicken the rate of progress of the most able pupils especially. Progress improved in writing but slipped back in reading and mathematics in the few years following the inspection. You recognised on your arrival that much needed to be done to stabilise a school that had been through a period of turbulence and to raise standards in all subjects. Pupils' progress in writing has improved this year but not as much as in reading and mathematics. There has been a moderate improvement this year in the proportion of the most able pupils working at a higher standard or greater depth in reading and mathematics. This is because of improvements in the teaching of these subjects. You recognise the need to increase further the numbers of most-able pupils meeting their potential by the end of each key stage and by the end of the early years across a wide range of subjects, especially writing.

Inspectors at the last inspection also identified the need for more opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing and mathematics skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Pupils in all year groups enjoy many opportunities to write for a range of purposes in different subjects. This is contributing to the improvement in the quality of writing. However, there are still far too few opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematics skills in a range of subjects, particularly the challenging problem-solving pupils consistently get to attempt in mathematics lessons.

A number of new governors have replaced previous governors in the last few years, including a new, experienced chair of governors. The governing body is becoming increasingly effective in its duties. Most governors have accessed training and this is helping them to ask the right questions. Governors generally know where the strengths and weaknesses are, including the need to make sure teachers challenge the most able pupils. Governors rightly have confidence in your leadership. They are not complacent. However, there is scope for governors to exercise greater tenacity in the way they challenge you and other leaders regarding the impact of your actions.

The local authority recognised the decline in the school following the previous inspection. It commissioned and funded external consultancy, advice and review, of which you and other leaders have made effective use. The local authority and the diocese have ensured that you have been supported in this, your first headship role.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make sure thorough checks are carried out on adults prior to taking up employment so that they can be considered safe to work with children. All adults are properly trained and understand their duties. As the designated safeguarding leader, you keep a record of all concerns, meetings, conversations and decisions. You make contact with the local authority if you have any doubts at all that a child may be at risk of harm.

Adults teach pupils how to stay safe. Pupils learn about fire and road safety, for example. Leaders have strengthened e-safety teaching so that pupils understand the risks associated with social networking and other uses of the internet.

Bullying is rare. You make sure incidents are reported and recorded. Pupils are confident that adults sort out any bullying so it stops. Pupils' excellent behaviour and the clear respect, tolerance and understanding they demonstrate for differences in culture, religion and gender make a strong contribution to pupils feeling safe in school.

## Inspection findings

- You have brought a new lease of life to the school, raising expectations and holding teachers to account for pupils' progress. You have balanced this increased challenge with effective support. You have more fully involved other leaders in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. These checks clearly identify the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the extent to which teachers uphold high standards, challenging pupils of all abilities. You have identified each teacher's strengths and interests, building on these to fortify middle leadership and increase enthusiasm. Teachers accept responsibility and value the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. All are beginning to make a growing contribution to improvements across the school. The progress made over the last year clearly demonstrates the capacity for further and sustained improvement at all levels of leadership.
- An increasing proportion of children over the last few years have reached a good level of development by the time they leave the early years. The vast majority of children, this year, reached the early learning goals in most areas of learning. The Reception inside and outside areas are very well organised. Areas are enticing to children, engaging them well. Children concentrate, make decisions and persevere with their chosen tasks. These attributes prepare children very well for learning in Year 1. However, from their mostly typical starting points when they join Reception, just a small handful of children make the rapid progress that enables them to exceed the early learning goals. Leaders recognise the need for tasks that are more consistently challenging for the most able children so that more of them fully meet their potential.
- There has been a substantial improvement in the progress of pupils in their reading. Almost all pupils are working at the expected standard and an increasing number of pupils are reading at greater depth. This is because of the effective action you have taken to stimulate pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for, reading. Pupils enjoy the challenge of finding out how many millions of words they have read this year. Pupils make good use of a welcoming library and the appealing book corners in each classroom. The new reading strategy you have introduced is improving pupils' comprehension and the way they respond to texts. I listened to two of the most able pupils read and was impressed with the way they have been taught to think carefully about what they read and how they read between the lines.
- Leaders and teachers have identified the most able pupils who should have attained more highly earlier in their schooling but did not because of weaker teaching. Greater challenge for these pupils has resulted in a modest improvement in the proportion of pupils at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 this year who have reached a high standard. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the numbers of pupils in all year groups who are now working at greater depth in reading and mathematics, though less so in writing and other subjects, including history, geography and science. Teachers are challenging pupils of all abilities, including the most able, in mathematics. Teachers routinely give pupils tricky problems to solve. This sort of challenge is less consistent in other subjects.

- Pupils have opportunities to write at length and for interesting purposes in a range of subjects. They sustain the improved standard of writing in other subjects that they demonstrate in English lessons. This is because teachers expect them to do this. Examples of this variety and improved quality in writing are displayed throughout the school and celebrated by adults and pupils. There are few opportunities for pupils to attempt in subjects such as geography and science the challenging mathematics they complete in mathematics lessons.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils achieve higher standards in a wide range of subjects, especially writing, in all phases of their learning
- teachers plan and deliver more opportunities for pupils to practise challenging mathematics problems in other subjects
- governors provide greater tenacity in the way that they hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Philip Riozzi  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We together visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning. With other leaders, we scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks and school summary assessment information, including the latest provisional end of Year 2 and Year 6 test and teacher assessment results. I held discussions with you throughout the school day and held discussions with other teachers and leaders. I also held a discussion with the chair of governors and a foundation governor, and had a brief telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I examined a number of documents, including the school improvement plan and self-evaluation statement. I considered 26 responses to the parent online questionnaire, Parent View, a number of written responses from parents, and chatted with a few parents at the start of the school day. In addition, I considered 28 responses to the pupil survey, held discussions with pupils, and considered 10 responses to the staff survey.