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Dear Mrs Milner

Short inspection of Woodside Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You provide clear leadership along with the drive and enthusiasm which motivates staff and pupils to achieve. You and your leadership team are ambitious for the pupils in your care, and are passionate to enrich and extend provision to further improve pupils' achievement.

Since becoming headteacher you have involved staff in evaluating the school's work and planning improvements, and have shared the responsibility for ensuring successful outcomes more widely. As a result, there is a strong sense of teamwork and collaboration within the school. This, together with the high priority given to supporting pupils' personal development and welfare, is a key strength within your school. Woodside Junior School is a particularly warm and welcoming community, and pupils and parents are rightly proud of their school and all that it achieves. Pupils are confident, highly articulate and display first-rate attitudes towards learning, their school and each other. The morale of staff is high. This sense of pride in their school was exemplified, at the time of this inspection, by the enthusiasm of parents, pupils, staff and governors actively involved in preparations for the school's 60th anniversary celebrations.

Pupils are well known, as individuals, to staff and each other, and staff take great care to support the pastoral development and achievement of them all. You ensure that particularly effective care and support is offered to vulnerable pupils. Pupils, and their parents expressed their appreciation of the willingness of staff to give extra time to enrich and extend learning. Pupils and parents particularly value the

wide variety of clubs, visits and activities on offer.

During your last inspection, the inspector recognised the many strengths of the school including: your well-designed curriculum; how effectively spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted; the standard of behaviour; and the quality of improvement planning. These continue to be key strengths of the school. The inspector also identified two areas for improvement. First, to improve the impact of teachers' feedback to pupils. Second, to provide more opportunities for the most able pupils to write for different purposes across the curriculum.

Leaders and governors have responded particularly well to these areas for improvement. You and other leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching, and have provided teachers with support and challenge to refine the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils' exercise books show that they receive regular feedback from teachers and use this to make improvements to their work. Across all year groups, current pupils are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Bright, colourful displays of pupils' work in classrooms exemplify high-quality written work. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to draft and refine their extended writing in their cross-curricular books. Some of the work produced by pupils, particularly the most able, in these books is of very high quality. However, some work in their science and topic books is less detailed and the tasks set are not always suitably pitched to meet pupils' needs.

Governors are an enthusiastic and highly dedicated team with a very good understanding of the school. They are kept well informed through regular visits to the school, and via their detailed analysis of leaders' accurate tracking and assessment information. Your school's self-evaluation and improvement planning are strong, have clear targets and are appropriately focused.

You have identified the correct priorities for further improvement and are taking the right actions to achieve them. You have rightly prioritised further raising attainment in English and mathematics, reviewing the wider curriculum and ensuring that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve. You are aware that there is more to be done to improve the level of challenge for the most able pupils still further, and to ensure all pupils receive greater challenge in science and the humanities.

Safeguarding is effective.

Woodside Junior School offers an especially nurturing and caring community. As safeguarding lead you personally ensure that all arrangements are fit for purpose, and that there is a shared culture of vigilance across the school. You are proactive and have rightly challenged the local authority and outside agencies, when necessary, to ensure timely and effective action is taken to support vulnerable pupils. In school there are clear, well-understood routines and meticulously kept records in place which enable you and your staff to manage safeguarding requirements. All staff have up-to-date training to an appropriate level and so they know what to do should they be worried about a pupil. Pupils have a clear understanding of e-safety and how to keep themselves safe. Governors are well

informed and work closely with staff to ensure that the work to keep pupils safe is given top priority and meets current requirements.

Overall, pupils' attendance has improved over recent years and is slightly above the national average. You recognise that some groups, including disadvantaged pupils, have had poor attendance rates in the past. The school actively engages with outside agencies and families to support improvement, but recognises that there is still more to do to improve communication and the attendance of some pupils in this group. Bullying and discrimination are very rare and pupils trust adults to resolve any concerns that they may have.

Parents and pupils recognise that Woodside offers a particularly safe and caring community where pupils are given responsibility and encouraged to look after each other. Some pupils opt to become peer mentors to support others who may feel vulnerable in school. Other pupils proudly explained their role as sports leaders, helping to run a club so that they can 'help other people to get sporty'. As several of the pupils told me during the inspection, 'The best things about school are the teachers and the friends that we make here.'

Inspection findings

- During this visit, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision including:
 - how effectively teaching and assessment enables the most able pupils to make strong progress in their writing skills, and middle-attaining pupils to make strong progress in reading skills
 - how well leaders have improved the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - the quality of learning in the wider curriculum.
- Typically, pupils enter the school with prior attainment well above the national average. In 2016, pupils made progress in line with national averages in writing and mathematics. Consequently, last year, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were above average. However, some middle-attaining pupils underperformed in reading last year. This is no longer the case. As a result of improvements to teaching, learning and assessment, and refined tracking systems, current cohorts are making stronger progress in reading. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to make strong progress from their starting points in writing and mathematics, and at least expected progress in reading.
- Leaders have prioritised raising the level of challenge for writing, particularly for the most able pupils. This inspection was conducted during a whole-school activities week during which a visiting author had inspired pupils to produce some impressive creative writing. In addition, leaders ensure that teachers regularly provide pupils with opportunities to draft, refine and improve their extended written work in their cross-curricular books. Highly detailed, imaginative and well-structured extended writing on subjects such as 'journey through the digestive

system' and 'bugland motel' demonstrate the high standards of writing pupils can produce. However, the standard achieved in pupils' science and topic books is not as high. More needs to be done to ensure that the most able pupils use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar and do not mix tenses in their extended writing in their English books.

- Mathematics remains a strength of the school. Pupils' books evidence the clear progress that they make over time. Teachers' focus on promoting reasoning skills this term is promoting deeper thinking and reflection. For example, Year 4 pupils produced detailed descriptions when challenged to reflect on a multi-stage interpretation of a graph as part of a mathematics investigation.
- Woodside staff know each pupil particularly well. Understanding pupils' individual needs, teachers and teaching assistants adapt tasks to ensure that learning is appropriately pitched. Effective planning enables leaders to ensure that all available resources are deployed to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that these groups make good progress over time. Teaching assistants were observed giving very effective support to emotionally vulnerable pupils. While a small minority of parents expressed reservations, the overwhelming majority were very appreciative of the extra support given to their children.
- Overall attendance has improved over time and is above national figures. Aware that last year the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was well below average, leaders have taken appropriate actions to address this. While figures have improved, more needs to be done to ensure that this group attend in line with their peers.
- Leaders have ensured that a broad curriculum is in place, with a wide variety of high-quality enrichment experiences. Music and drama have become strengths of the school with opportunities for pupils to become involved in concerts and performances. The wide curriculum, balanced with the caring and inclusive atmosphere, develops pupils' confidence. As a result, Woodside pupils are articulate and their oracy is particularly strong. Pupils enthused about the wealth of sporting and other clubs, visiting speakers and activities on offer. However, pupils' books show that teachers' expectations are not as consistently high in science and topic as they are in English and mathematics. Pupils, particularly the most able, are not set sufficiently challenging tasks which require them to problem-solve and think as deeply in science and the humanities as they do in English and mathematics. Consequently, although enrichment is impressive, pupils' progress is not yet as strong across the curriculum as it is in reading, writing and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- sustained high levels of challenge from teachers ensure that progress continues to improve, particularly for the most able pupils
- the quality of pupils' work and their depth of learning in science and the wider

curriculum are improved by giving more challenging activities and further opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a subject-specific context

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve to match that of their peers.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your acting deputy headteacher, teachers, and members of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Jointly, with you and your acting deputy headteacher, I visited several classrooms to look at teaching and learning. I looked at a range of pupils' work in their exercise books. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and around the school, and had a meeting with a small group of pupils. I took into account 79 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. I also considered the views represented in 34 responses to a staff survey and 86 responses to a pupil survey. I evaluated a range of documents, including pupils' progress information and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.