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Mrs Joanne Poyser  
Wirksworth Infant School  
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Derbyshire  
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Dear Mrs Poyser

### **Short inspection of Wirksworth Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 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 November 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 strong leadership across the federation of infant schools and have communicated a clear vision, which is understood and shared by all staff. You are ably supported by the senior teacher who shares your high aspirations for all pupils. Staff are keen to support you in realising your aims and reaching your expectations. Leaders, staff and governors are utterly united in driving improvements.

Leaders and governors have a detailed and in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further improvement. Clear and strategic action plans are in place. This means that everyone understands their part in school improvement.

Leaders work well with other schools and external agencies to seek support and to collaborate. They are keen to learn from the successes of others and to share their own good practice. You are well supported by the local authority, representatives of which have a detailed understanding of the school.

You have created a culture where everyone matters. Staff feel well supported and valued. For example, they are appreciative of the work to ensure their well-being. They are extremely proud to work at the school, which they describe as 'a community, a family'.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy and they feel safe. Pupils are cared

for extremely well. They recognise that their teachers want them to do well and are keen to meet their expectations. Pupils are confident and welcoming. For example, pupils were keen to talk to me about their learning and their experiences of school and life.

A strength of the school is the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Much work is undertaken to ensure that pupils experience a wide range of enriching activities. The 18 school values, which incorporate fundamental British values, underpin this work and permeate all that the school does. For example, pupils have taken part in local well dressing activities, using the value of 'justice' as part of their design. At the time of the inspection, pupils were learning about Remembrance Day. Much of their work used the motif of the poppy to consider the value of respect. Pupils were in the process of painting poppies onto rocks and they excitedly explained how these were to be presented as part of Remembrance Day commemorations in the town.

Parents are extremely positive about their children's experiences at the school. They feel that their children make good progress and are appreciative of the support and care they receive. Relationships between the school and parents are very positive. Strong communication supports pupils' progress.

Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There is a wide range of experience and skills among the governing body. These are well used to ensure that all aspects of school governance are effectively managed. Governing body meetings are well attended and focus clearly on school improvement. Link governors meet regularly with leaders and undertake a balance of strategic and practical activities to support further improvements to all aspects of the school's work. Governors have the skills to hold leaders to account and do so effectively.

You have taken effective action to address areas in need of improvement identified at the last inspection. You have introduced a new marking and feedback policy. The 'tickled pink and green for growth' approach is understood by all staff and pupils. There is now greater consistency in teachers' application of the policy. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on and improve their work. However, it is not always clear how pupils are expected to do this. You are aware of the need to provide further clarity of expectations to ensure that this strategy specifies purposeful and meaningful activities.

The last inspection also identified the need to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to reach their full potential. There is evidence to show that the most able pupils are challenged by more difficult work, both in terms of activities they are set and in the way that teachers question and encourage them in lessons. This is particularly effective in mathematics.

Performance management is robust. Staff are set clear targets in relation to pupils' progress and whole-school priorities. You carefully review teachers' performance against these targets and use this to present recommendations to the governing body.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff understand their responsibilities and systems are robust and thorough. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff are regularly updated regarding safeguarding matters. Staff and governors are appropriately trained. They are aware of risks pertinent to the local area.

Records are very well kept and of high quality. They support staff in securing the well-being and safety of pupils. The school's single central record is fit for purpose. The designated safeguarding lead involves external agencies as appropriate and is tenacious in following up concerns to ensure that appropriate action is taken in a timely manner.

The curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, pupils participate in a 'staying safe in cyberspace' day and are able to explain how to protect themselves from the potential risks posed by the internet. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 proudly showed me posters they had designed on bonfire and firework safety, following a recent visit by the local fire service. An extensive assembly programme supports this work.

## **Inspection findings**

- The school is considerably smaller than the average-sized primary school, and pupils are taught in a mixed class in Years 1 and 2. Regular and rigorous assessments ensure that teachers have a detailed understanding of each pupil's ability and needs, and consider this in planning activities for different groups of pupils. They are thus able to ensure that the wide range of pupils' needs are met. The most able pupils are effectively challenged and the least able pupils are well supported. Pupils make very good progress by the time they leave key stage 1.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are well supported. The leader for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), liaises with pre-school providers and parents to ensure that pupils' needs are correctly identified before they begin school. In addition, the SENCo monitors all pupils to check that any additional needs are identified once they have started school. Appropriate support is put in place quickly and evaluated regularly, and amendments to provision are made as required. The SENCo involves external agencies when further support is necessary, for example by securing the services of educational psychologists and speech and language therapists. Staff are well trained and supported by the SENCo.
- The 'Rainbow group' is a strength of the school. This provides bespoke provision for pupils who need additional support to develop the confidence, independence and social skills to succeed at school. Pupils who attend this provision are carefully monitored and their progress against detailed targets is regularly reviewed. During the inspection, I observed a small group of pupils collaborating well, enjoying their learning and making clear progress towards their specific

targets. They were clearly enjoying their successes in doing so.

- In recent years, pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 1 have been above national averages. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading was similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in writing and mathematics was above the national average, and a larger proportion than the national average achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving these standards has been below the national average in recent years, including in 2017. You have introduced a new approach to tracking and monitoring the impact of the provision on this group of pupils to ensure that their progress is a key focus during scrutiny meetings. You keep detailed records, which enable you to evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategies and interventions and to amend them accordingly. Governors hold you rigorously to account for the spending of the pupil premium funding and the impact it has on disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. Improving outcomes for this group of pupils remains a priority.
- Children in the early years setting make a good start to their lives in school. You conduct thorough assessments when children begin school and use this information, alongside information provided by pre-school providers and parents, to design provision that meets their needs. Your assessments indicate that many children enter the school with levels of development slightly below those typical for their age. Monitoring and tracking of children's progress now follow the same approaches as those used in key stage 1, and staff are held to close account for children's progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has improved. However, it remains below the national average.
- In recent years, attendance has been below the national average for all pupils and disadvantaged pupils and declined further in 2017. In September 2017, you introduced a more rigorous approach to monitoring pupils' attendance. You work with pupils, staff and parents to identify barriers to regular attendance and put in support where needed. You have shared your high expectations with parents and routinely remind them of the importance of regular attendance, for example via the website and through the school's weekly newsletter. The impact of this new approach on whole-school attendance has yet to come to fruition. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has significantly reduced this academic year. You recognise that improving attendance remains a priority.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies already in place to improve the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year are embedded and developed
- outcomes for disadvantaged pupils by the end of key stage 1 are improved

- strategies to improve pupils' attendance are developed further to bring about increased rates of attendance for all groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I held meetings with senior leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. I reviewed reports about the school's work, written by local authority officers. I met with a group of staff and considered the 14 responses to Ofsted's survey of school staff. I spoke with parents before school and considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and the 14 free-text responses. I also considered the 35 responses to a survey of parents' views conducted by the school. I met formally with a group of pupils and spoke with pupils in their lessons. I listened to a small group of pupils read. I looked at pupils' work in their lessons and at a sample of work across different year groups and abilities. I visited all classes, including the nurture group, with senior leaders, and observed pupils' learning. I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, monitoring documents and records relating to safeguarding. I also viewed the information on the school's website.