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Mr Gary Tucker  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Tucker

### **Short inspection of Woodmancote School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 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 December 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You lead an effective leadership team, who act cohesively to ensure that the school maintains high standards. Leaders and governors have acted on the areas for improvement since the last inspection and can give evidence of this work.

All leaders and governors have an accurate assessment of the school's performance. They carry out regular monitoring of all aspects of school performance and act decisively when tackling areas for development. Each leader has a finger on the pulse when it comes to monitoring the quality of teaching across the school. They have worked closely with class teachers and support staff to ensure that training is effective and improves pupils' progress.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils and keep pupils at the core of every decision regarding school improvement. Through comprehensive and thorough analysis, the leadership team has highlighted the next steps which will help the school improve further. An example of this work is the change of approach to writing across the school. Leaders have identified the need to improve pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and a range of sentence structures in their writing. Even though this work only started in September, it is already improving the quality of writing across the school.

Leaders act with all information to hand when making school improvement decisions and regularly evaluate the impact of their work. Leaders have embraced innovative ideas. They successfully engage with the local authority and other schools as well as participating in local initiatives. Leaders share ideas with other schools, as well as engaging with them to organise exciting professional development opportunities.

Leaders and governors have invested in professional development for all staff. When I visited classes, I noted how teaching assistants were particularly skilled in supporting pupils. In most cases, such was the quality of support, it was increasingly difficult to determine which adult was the class teacher. It is already evident that these actions are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Staff were keen to inform me how much they enjoy working at the school. They value the opportunities available to develop professionally and feel trusted by leaders to embrace innovative practice. Middle leaders are particularly passionate about the school and describe the 'buzz' around the school. Leaders are enthused and embrace research opportunities. Leaders have created a culture where staff are valued, well-trained and successfully carry out their roles to improve pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders carry out thorough employment checks for staff who wish to work at the school. Once employed, staff have access to high-quality training to ensure that the culture of safeguarding is of highest importance. Leaders also regularly audit the staff's understanding of safeguarding. The findings then inform future training. As a result, staff are well equipped to safeguard pupils and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. Leaders have developed a system for recording concerns that is well organised and shows clearly where leaders have requested support from external agencies.

Leaders release a weekly briefing for all members of staff, providing them with updates on the school and upcoming events. A mainstay of this document is a safeguarding update which aims to bring certain elements of safeguarding to the fore. Leaders consider both local and national safeguarding events when updating staff, to ensure that the information is current and relevant. The local authority has carried out an audit of safeguarding practice across the school. Subsequently, leaders have tackled actions from this audit to ensure that the practice of safeguarding is effective.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. Firstly, I considered the effectiveness of actions to improve the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in writing across key stage 2, particularly those who were working below age-related expectations at the end of key stage 1. Secondly, I explored how adults help pupils who join key stage 1 working below age-related expectations to catch up with their peers, particularly in mathematics. Thirdly, I considered whether the teaching of phonics supports pupils to achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. I also considered the support provided for pupils

who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the impact this has on the progress they make. Finally, we considered whether safeguarding is effective.

- Pupils' books demonstrated strong progress from the start of this academic year. It is clear that the school's approach to writing is particularly improving the sentence structure, grammar and punctuation that pupils use. Teachers' feedback was also accessible to pupils. As a result, pupils could identify their next steps and act on these. Progress in writing for disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was therefore above national averages although their attainment remains below national averages.
- Leaders speak confidently about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in writing. They monitor books frequently and act on emerging findings. There is a cohesive approach to developing writing across the school and teacher assessments of writing are accurate. The high quality of teaching across the school has resulted in most pupils who were previously working below age-related expectations catching up with their peers. Leaders are keen to promote a love of writing among pupils. They have successfully raised standards in writing while also promoting each pupil's own authorial style. Pupils' books show clearly that each has developed their own writing style, which is always improving.
- My next focus was pupils who left Reception having attained levels in mathematics below age-related expectations and how well adults help them to catch up with their peers. Alongside your mathematics leader, we quickly observed that classrooms are a 'number rich' environment. Pupils use the environment well to support them if they get stuck or need more help. We observed sessions where pupils were using a range of apparatus to represent numbers and were well able to articulate their understanding. As a result, pupils build solid understanding in mathematics and can represent that understanding in a range of ways.
- The mathematics leader spoke passionately about the school's approach to teaching mathematics. In each classroom we visited, this approach came to life. There were opportunities for pupils to access resources in each class and the conversation between pupils was rich in reasoning about number. In one key stage 1 class, two teachers from Shanghai were teaching mathematics sessions. Pupils enjoyed these sessions and participated with enthusiasm. Leaders accurately monitor and evaluate the quality of mathematics across the school. As a result, pupils who were previously working below age-related expectations have now caught up.
- We observed phonics sessions in Reception, Year 1 and a catch-up intervention in Year 3. We saw high-quality sessions which took into consideration the individual needs of pupils. These sessions build on prior knowledge and strong progress is evident. Adults who teach these sessions show high levels of skill when supporting pupils who require more specific support. Adults teach these phonics sessions in an engaging and effective way and pupils feel equipped to succeed. Effective assessments inform these sessions and adults provide challenge to help pupils develop further understanding. However, we noted that few children exceed the early learning goal for writing and you agreed that increasing opportunities for children to practise using phonics for writing in Reception would be beneficial.
- Provision to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is positive. Leaders

have devised specific support plans for these pupils. Leaders revise these plans frequently to ensure that they are current and effective. Class teachers and support staff collect evidence against these targets and take responsibility for pupils' progress. The SEN coordinator (SENCo) and class teacher share this progress with parents so they feel well informed about the work taking place in school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are working at age-related expectations increases and is closer to national averages by the end of key stage 2
- children in Reception have more opportunities to use their phonic skills in writing activities so that more exceed the early learning goals for writing by the end of the Reception Year.

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

Yours sincerely

Nathan Kemp  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I spoke to you and other senior leaders. I also met with your early years leader, your literacy leaders and the SENCo. I also spoke to representatives of the governing body and a local authority representative from Gloucestershire Council. I made visits to lessons to observe pupils accompanied by senior leaders. We also scrutinised the work in pupils' books.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation and the current school development plan, as well as progress and attendance information. Additionally, I scrutinised various safeguarding records, including those relating to the suitability of staff to work with children. I took account of 177 responses to the Parent View online survey and 24 responses to the staff survey.