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Alison Penny
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Penny

Short inspection of Woodlands Park Primary 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 know the strengths in your school and areas that need improving. In particular, you know your pupils and their families well. Your staff work well as a team. They are enthusiastic and determined to help pupils achieve well. Together with the rest of your senior leadership team, you have focused, quite rightly, on improving the quality and consistency of teaching so that pupils make good progress in their learning. Your recently introduced approach to teacher development, based on rigorous checks on the quality of teaching, has helped you to identify teachers' strengths and the next steps for their development reliably. The well-targeted training for teachers and teaching assistants is effective in developing their skills.

The governing body provides good oversight of the school. Governors have made effective use of training from the local authority and increased their effectiveness. They know how well the school is doing and where it needs to develop. They provide you with strong support and an appropriate level of challenge.

I enjoyed talking to your pupils. They spoke confidently about their work and how much they like school. One pupil said that the school feels like a big family. You make sure that newly arrived pupils settle in well. Pupils respect their teachers and feel safe and valued. In classrooms, I saw them working well together. They settled down to work quickly and had lots of helpful opportunities to share their ideas.

Many of the activities we saw in classes were closely matched to the pupils' abilities.

You have successfully tackled the area for improvement identified in the previous inspection. It was recommended that school leaders improve the quality of teaching further. Teachers know the expectations that you have of them. For example, all teachers follow the strategy that senior leaders have introduced to improve pupils' writing. In addition, teachers and teaching assistants have received training in how to challenge pupils in mathematics and in how to tackle pupils' misconceptions.

Historical information shows an improving picture for pupils' achievement in the early years and key stage 1. However, at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils made slower rates of progress in writing and mathematics than they did in reading. Although they made better progress in 2017, you have maintained a clear focus on continuing to improve provision and outcomes for pupils in these subjects. You have helped teachers to appreciate the standards that pupils must reach in writing and mathematics by working in partnership with other local schools to look at and compare pupils' work. This has sharpened the guidance teachers give to pupils to improve their work. However, you realise there is still a need to push for greater consistency in the quality of teaching.

Your school has an above-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils. You have identified the barriers to learning that each of them faces and make effective use of the pupil premium funding to develop ways to overcome them. As a consequence, these pupils made similar rates of progress to others, or better, in most years and subjects last year.

Attendance figures remained below average last year due to relatively high rates of persistent absence. As well as constantly highlighting the negative effects of poor attendance and recognising and rewarding regular attendance, you work closely with the education welfare officer and the school's pastoral support leader to engage with identified families. Your efforts are having the desired outcome as the current attendance rate has improved to around the national average for primary schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are acutely aware of your responsibility to keep children safe and give pupils' well-being the utmost priority. Your senior leadership team has made sure that all the appropriate safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff value and care for pupils. They know each pupil well and are prompt in reporting any concerns. School leaders go to great lengths to ensure that absent pupils are safe. Several parents reported that the school looks after their children well.

All adults are appropriately trained in safeguarding pupils and know the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Pupils stated they feel safe at school and they had learned how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Records relating to safeguarding are maintained and stored securely. Governors make regular checks to ensure that safeguarding procedures are up to scratch.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, which included your two assistant headteachers, we agreed some areas to explore so that I could be satisfied that your school remains good. It was reassuring that you had already identified the same areas as I had in my preparation for the inspection. We decided to focus on:
 - how school leaders ensure that current pupils make strong progress in writing and mathematics
 - how effectively the pupil premium is spent to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress, particularly in writing and mathematics
 - how effective leaders have been in improving pupils' attendance.
- We saw pupils in most years of key stage 2 hard at work in both mathematics and writing. Their books showed that they take pride in their work, presenting it neatly and completing exercises. They also showed that pupils from different starting points, including those who are disadvantaged, made good progress over time.
- Pupils' books showed that they develop good fluency in mathematics and have good opportunities for reasoning. However, we agreed that sometimes pupils spend too much time on work they have already mastered before moving on to more challenging work. You explained to me the programme that you have introduced to support pupils whose basic mathematical skills are weak. I observed one of these sessions and scrutinised work books. It was clear that pupils on the programme are becoming secure in basic number facts.
- Pupils are making rapid progress in their writing. We noted how well their handwriting has improved over time, along with the quality of their sentences and their use of vocabulary. They would benefit from more opportunities to practise and develop their skills in extended pieces of writing.
- We looked at recent figures for absence and persistent absence. While realising that in a small school a single pupil's absence will greatly affect overall attendance figures, we agreed that the figures were too high last year. It was clear that persistent absenteeism was the major factor. You shared with me the steps the school has taken to promote regular attendance. There are clear signs that attendance rates are improving this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the improvement in pupils' progress is sustained by making sure that pupils move on to more demanding tasks in mathematics promptly and are given good opportunities to practise their skills in extended writing
- the drive to improve pupils' attendance continues so that attendance figures are at least in line with the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

James McVeigh
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, administration staff, the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority. I spoke briefly with several parents as they arrived at school. I visited all classrooms, usually with you, to see pupils engaged in their learning and to look in their books. Together with you and your assistant headteachers, I looked at pupils' written work and the school's information about pupils' performance.

I examined school documents, including records about safeguarding, self-evaluation, attendance figures and governors' meetings. I spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at breaktimes, and met with a small group of Year 5 and 6 pupils. I considered 21 responses to the online survey, Parent View, including five written comments, 20 responses to the staff survey and four to the pupil survey.