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Mrs Gallant
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Dear Mrs Gallant

Short inspection of Woodseaves CE Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2018, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2011. Ofsted conducted an interim assessment of the predecessor school in March 2014 which indicated that performance was being sustained. The school converted to become an academy in April 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Staff and parents are very proud of the school's positive ethos. Due to the small size of Woodseaves, individual pupils are known well to staff. This is a happy school that is at the centre of the community. Since the last inspection a new leadership team have been appointed. Leaders have been quick to identify priorities including necessary changes to assessment and the curriculum. Leaders are skilled, energetic, and committed to improving teaching and learning further. Though attainment is rising across the school, the progress pupils make by the end of key stage 2 has not been good enough in recent years.

By the end of key stage 2, the majority of pupils leave the school at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils' progress in 2016 and 2017 at the end of key stage 2 was well below other schools nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics. Leaders acknowledge that this is due to historical issues with the quality of assessment in key stage 1 and the overall quality of teaching and learning over time.

The school is part of the West Stafford multi-academy trust. This trust was established in 2015 and consists of three local primary schools. The trust have offered little support or challenge to the school. The trust have not adequately held leaders to account for pupils' progress, particularly in the last two years. A new chief executive officer (CEO) was appointed to the trust in November 2017. He is quickly establishing a more rigorous approach to school accountability and monitoring. It is too early to see the impact of this new approach. The CEO acknowledges that support has not been good enough in the past.

Several governors were appointed to the governing body over the last term. A new chair of governors took up post last year. Governors are candid about the important actions they need to take to secure better oversight of the school's performance. They have the skills and capacity to offer even greater challenge and support.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils enjoy talking to visitors and say that their school is great. During the inspection, a large group of pupils were receiving musical tuition from a visiting teacher. Pupils were attentive, focused and enjoyed playing their violins. Pupils also love to sing. They are very tuneful and can navigate complex rounds, singing popular songs.

Parents are highly satisfied with the school. Every respondent to Ofsted's online questionnaire would recommend the school. Parents particularly appreciate the quality of communication and the family feel. Many parents also submitted comments via free-text. Again, the vast majority of comments were positive. One parent stated: 'The school has that all important good feeling surrounding it and the positivity is evident in the faces of its pupils.'

At the last inspection, the predecessor school was asked to improve the teaching of mixed-age groups by using assessment data to match pupils' needs, and develop the roles of subject leaders in monitoring the impact that teaching has on learning. These areas of development were carried forward by the school when it became an academy and have been a focus of staff training and development. Pupils' books show that teachers adapt activities within mixed-age classes to meet individual needs. This is particularly evident in mathematics where pupils are encouraged to reason and explain their thinking. Teachers are ensuring that pupils make progress over time across the curriculum. However, the level of challenge can vary across key stage 2.

Leaders have been developed further and now undertake a range of monitoring activities. Since the last inspection the school have appointed a new deputy headteacher. The deputy headteacher provides staff with feedback on their work. New support and strategies have been established to respond to any identified weaknesses, such as the quality of spelling in pupils' daily writing and the consistent level of challenge in mathematics. There is now greater capacity in leadership.

The school has several key strengths, a cornerstone of which is pupils' behaviour and the quality of relationships with families. Leaders and governors recognise that there are now priorities for improvement in the following areas: governors require

training to help them better understand performance information and to ensure full compliance with the publication of statutory information; the level of monitoring and oversight from the trust is too weak and is not assisting the school to improve outcomes; some pupils do not routinely spell common words correctly in their daily writing; and there is scope for an even greater level of challenge in mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team keep a close eye on pupils' safety and have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Respondents to Ofsted's questionnaires and surveys all feel that pupils are safe. Staff receive regular training and updates from the headteacher about any local or national issues. Any referrals to the local authority set out the actions that leaders have taken and are followed through to a satisfactory conclusion.

Pupils that I spoke to say that they feel safe. Older pupils were able to recall the safety messages that they received from representatives of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in a recent workshop. Pupils talk with confidence about how they can manage any worries that they may have and whom they can talk to.

Inspection findings

- Strong levels of attendance have been maintained over a number of years. Pupils enjoy coming to school and rarely miss a day of learning. Attendance is above national levels and persistent absence is low.
- The membership of the governing body has changed considerably in the last year. The chair of governors has commissioned a skills audit and matched governors to different areas of the school. In the last year, governors with links to specific areas of the school have visited frequently to check on the progress of key developments. These areas include standards in reading, safeguarding and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, governors have not adequately scrutinised performance information. This is in part due to their training needs. Governors have also not ensured that the school's website meets the requirements set out by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Additional funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Pupils benefit from additional one-to-one and small-group work. There are no marked differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Pupil premium expenditure has been evaluated for the last year but a new strategy for current spending has not been finalised or published on the school's website. Leaders do have a clear rationale for expenditure and can evidence the positive difference that funding makes.
- Teachers use assessment information increasingly accurately across the school. The headteacher has introduced an effective system to track pupils' progress. Teachers use their tracking to plan lessons and respond to any gaps in pupils' learning. The school has also worked with other local schools to moderate the

judgements that teachers make about pupils' work. As a result, outcomes in key stage 1 are now more reliable and valid.

- The mathematics leader has introduced new strategies to ensure that pupils are given more frequent opportunities to reason and solve problems. Staff have been well trained to offer more challenge and deepen pupils' understanding in mathematics. The leader has made checks on pupils' progress to assess the impact of staff training. These checks have allowed the leader to respond to any issues and improve the teaching of mathematics further. However, there is still some variation in the extent to which pupils are challenged in key stage 2. New ways of teaching must now be sustained so that pupils' progress can be accelerated even further.
- Children make a very strong start to their learning in Reception. A high proportion of children reach a good level of development. Staff carefully assess children's progress and plan activities that engage and stimulate learning. For example, I observed pupils enthusiastically selecting different toys from the past to write about. They had been visited by a member of the community who had shared toys that she used to play with as a child. Children were quick to point out how important it was to look after the toys and that they were 'precious' items.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors receive training to help them better understand the school's performance so that they more fully hold leaders to account for pupils' progress
- the school's website meets the requirements set out by the DfE by publishing all the relevant financial information, strategies for the expenditure of additional funding and other links for parents and carers
- the trust offers the school a greater level of support and challenge by establishing a clear monitoring programme
- work continues to develop the level of challenge that pupils receive in mathematics
- pupils receive additional support to ensure that they successfully spell common words correctly in their writing.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Keay
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with the leadership team to review the school's self-evaluation and school development plan. We agreed several key lines of enquiry to ascertain if the school remains good and that safeguarding is effective.

I visited every classroom. Observations in key stages 1 and 2 were undertaken jointly with you. I scrutinised pupils' books across the school.

I reviewed a range of school documents including: the single central record; child protection files; risk assessments; training records; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; action plans for the expenditure of additional funding; a review of the governing body; and attendance information.

I took account of feedback from 32 respondents to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, 25 free-text responses from parents, 23 responses to the pupil survey and six responses to the staff survey. I met with parents at the start of the day as pupils arrived at school.

I met with seven members of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair of governors. The CEO of the trust also attended this meeting.