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Mr Edward Carlyle
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Carlyle

Short inspection of Warmington School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 school was judged to be good in December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have only recently taken up your post as executive headteacher and have quickly established your vision for Warmington school. You and the other staff have successfully identified the areas for development.

In the last inspection report, leaders were asked to ensure that teachers plan and adapt tasks to challenge pupils further. Using assessment information, teachers plan tasks that challenge pupils across the curriculum to achieve more. This is particularly noticeably in mathematics, in which teachers set tasks with increasing levels of difficulty. Pupils are keen to tackle the 'hot' or 'flaming hot' challenges to deepen their understanding.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that teachers and subject leaders have opportunities to share good practice with each other. The collaboration between Warmington and Titchmarsh schools has enabled your staff to work together on cross-school projects and developments, such as the implementation of the new approach to the teaching of mathematics. It has also provided opportunities for staff to carry out joint training and moderation, and to share good practice between staff at the two schools.

Teaching remains good and is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. The teaching of phonics, however, is inconsistent. Some teachers' expectations of pupils' writing are not high enough. This means that not all pupils make the progress they should.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They said that their children are happy, well cared for and make good progress. All the parents I spoke with said that there is always someone available to talk to if they have a problem. They appreciate that you or the head of school are always available at the beginning of the school day to greet pupils and talk with parents.

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved. They are kind and polite to one another and play happily together. They said that their learning is never interrupted by poor behaviour. The pupils I spoke with said that their teachers make learning fun, and that they enjoy challenging themselves to achieve as much as they can. They strive to have their positive behaviour recognised by having their name moved to the 'rainbow zone' and by being awarded merits for good work or behaviour. Pupils said that they feel very safe in school, and know how to keep themselves safe when on the internet and using social media. They know that there is always someone they can talk to if they have a problem.

The governing body is committed to ensuring that the school is the best it can be. It is aware of the current priorities for the school, and of what actions are being taken to develop these. Governors are committed to their roles and regularly carry out monitoring visits to check practice at the school. They receive detailed assessment information from the executive headteacher. Governors then use external information to verify what they are being told and to provide challenge, particularly when progress slows.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The designated safeguarding leads have been diligent in ensuring that all staff are aware of the need to safeguard pupils. All staff I spoke with have a clear understanding that incidents can happen anywhere and that it is their business to pass on safeguarding concerns. Staff, including teaching assistants, teachers and the school's business manager, told me that they have regular training. This training includes discussing a range of scenarios and case studies to heighten staff awareness of safeguarding issues that they may encounter. Staff said that they found this training useful in ensuring that they are aware of the different types of abuse.

Records are well managed and maintained by the designated safeguarding leads who have a good understanding of current and past cases. They have good relationships with different support agencies and seek advice from the local authority or other agencies when appropriate. The safeguarding governor ensures that processes and procedures meet requirements.

Inspection findings

- You have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced. It is structured to ensure that, despite the small number of pupils in some year groups, subjects

are well covered. Checks on pupils' progress, including regular meetings with teachers, ensure that pupils' needs are met. You have responded well to the fluctuation in class sizes, and you and the staff adapt well to cater for the different class sizes.

- You and the English leader have identified that pupils are not making enough progress in writing. You have introduced a new approach to the teaching of spelling across the school, and you are encouraging pupils to use learned spelling strategies when writing. Teachers, however, are sometimes not confident in building pupils' writing skills. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve. They are not using their knowledge of what pupils can already do to develop their skills. Some teaching is more effective. These teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to develop pupils' skills well. Their pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to make their work better.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. During some phonics sessions, the teaching of new sounds was confused. New sounds were not practised and rehearsed well. Some staff are not demonstrating the pure phonics sound accurately. As a result, some pupils are saying sounds incorrectly. Where teaching is more effective, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils use the skills they have learned to develop their reading and spelling. Teachers build on prior learning to systematically develop skills and understanding.
- You have identified mathematics as a priority for this year. Since September 2017, you have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics, encouraging pupils to choose their own level of challenge. Teachers adapt tasks fluently during lessons to move pupils' learning on. The mathematics leader has carefully tracked the progress that pupils are making. This and your own assessment information show that pupils are making accelerated progress in mathematics throughout the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have high expectations of pupils' writing, and use assessment information to develop pupils' writing skills
- the teaching of phonics is consistent and systematically develops pupils' skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the head of the school. I held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and four other governors. I spoke with the school's business manager, the leader for mathematics, teachers, teaching assistants and a lunchtime supervisor. I met with seven pupils. You and I observed learning taking place during the morning, including in the Nursery.

I scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including its self-evaluation document, its improvement plan and documents relating to safeguarding.

I considered the view of parents by speaking with some of them before school. I also analysed the 32 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I considered the seven responses to Ofsted's survey of staff.