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Mrs Jane Taylor
Headteacher
Windy Arbor Primary School
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Dear Mrs Taylor

Short inspection of Windy Arbor Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Windy Arbor Primary School is a caring and inclusive school. Children are at the heart of all decisions that leaders make. The school's aim is to 'encourage everyone to become lifelong learners and REACH' for the stars'. They do this by promoting respect, confidence and harmony across the whole school community. Staff are committed to promoting these principles. Parents and carers said that staff 'go above and beyond' to support pupils and their families.

Since the last inspection, an acting chair of governors has been elected, and you have been appointed relatively recently to your role. Together with the senior leadership team, you have not only maintained the good standard of education but are committed to improving standards further. You have quickly established a proactive and enthusiastic leadership team that supports you well in developing the school. The school development plan correctly identifies appropriate priorities.

Children arrive in the morning happy and eager to learn. The overwhelming majority of pupils are positive about their learning and said that they feel well supported by teachers. Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. They talked confidently about their learning.

You and your staff know your community well. Staff communicate well with parents,

who are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the education their children receive. They value the parents' workshops, drop-ins and opportunities to talk to staff at the gate in the morning. One parent said that they feel 'the school is like a family'. Another said, 'It takes a special kind of teacher to teach the way they teach.'

The school is undergoing some building work, which has presented additional challenges. However, you have ensured that the focus of the school remains firmly on improving outcomes. You have put in place appropriate risk assessments to ensure that all pupils are safe.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to ensure that middle leaders for mathematics and English were supported to develop in their roles. Another recommendation was to improve teaching by sharing good practice and providing more challenge for the most able pupils.

Middle leaders, most of whom were appointed to their responsibilities since the last inspection, are becoming more established in their roles. They receive good support to lead their phases and subjects more effectively. They feel empowered by being part of the senior leadership team. They are reflective and articulate clearly the part they play in improving standards and progress.

Good practice is now shared more widely both within school and across the Unity Trust collaboration of schools. Staff appreciate and learn from the opportunity to see other teachers teach.

Challenge for the most able pupils is still identified as an area for improvement in the school's development plan, and much of the training and support that staff receive is focused on this area of improvement. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching in both reading and mathematics.

The governing body has experienced a number of changes in personnel recently. Governors recognise that this, along with the building work, has presented some extra challenges for the school. Despite this, governors have ensured that they remain focused on the school's key priorities. They understand that they need to develop their skills further to provide more effective support and challenge to the relatively new leadership team. Governors have been proactive in seeking support for their own development.

Although the school remains a good school, leaders and governors acknowledge that there is always room for improvement. They all share your ambition for the school to improve further to ensure that teaching continues to improve, leadership at all levels continues to develop and the level of challenge for all pupils is consistently high.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead and the inclusion team work well together to follow up on referrals and make sure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. They escalate their concerns and follow up on support from external agencies effectively. They provide training for teachers and other staff and support them when they raise concerns about pupils. They always make sure that staff know how their concerns have been followed up and what actions have been taken.

Parents praise highly the staff and the support they provide. Support is not restricted to term time. Staff acknowledge that holidays can be stressful times for families who are facing challenging circumstances. Staff described visits they have made to support families during holidays.

The inclusion team works on all aspects of safeguarding including attendance. It helps parents to understand how important it is for children to attend school regularly. For example, pupils who are frequently late to school are encouraged to join the walking bus to and from school. This helps parents who find it difficult to get their children to school on time.

Inspection findings

- The good leadership and management have been maintained and developed since the last inspection. Leaders have established a culture in which teachers and other staff regularly reflect on their practice and focus on improving their skills. Teachers observe each other teach and visit other schools to see good practice. Teachers share key messages with all staff from any training they attend. Senior leaders monitor the impact of training through lesson observations, looking at work in books and listening to pupils read. As a result, teaching is improving. Leaders acknowledge that more could be done to ensure that priorities for improvement, staff training and action plans are more strategically coordinated.
- Leaders have put in place a number of initiatives to improve attendance, for example the walking bus. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains higher than the national average. The poor attendance of some pupils is due to medical conditions. Leaders acknowledge that they still need to focus on improving attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- In lessons, there is now a stronger emphasis on providing more challenge for the most able pupils, while still providing more structured support for pupils who need it. For example, in a guided reading session, small groups were working on different texts according to the pupils' needs. Pupils were keen to participate because teachers and other adults used questioning skilfully to support their learning. The most able pupils were able to draw inferences and articulate these well. For example, pupils studying a novel compared fledglings learning to fly

with a premature baby growing stronger each day.

- In key stage 1 mathematics, a teacher modelled problem solving well. However, work in pupils' books shows that pupils do not have enough opportunity to work independently on problem solving. Leaders acknowledge that this is still an area for development across all key stages, including in the early years.
- The most able pupils read fluently and often. However, when choosing books for reading for pleasure, they do not always choose books that extend their abilities and interests. Some pupils revert to familiar stories and do not read as widely as they could. Staff acknowledge that there is more they could do to encourage pupils to choose more challenging texts and capitalise on pupils' love of reading to raise standards.
- The early years is a strength of the school. Children progress well in the Nursery and Reception Years from low starting points. All children, including the most able children, are well supported and their targets are regularly reviewed. A wide range of engaging activities keeps children focused on learning. For example, children were dressed as fire fighters while designing a fire station using building bricks. Staff generally support children well. For example, one boy used the interactive white board with the help of a teaching assistant to practise sounding out and reading words, using his phonics skills. Well-established routines support children to feel secure. As a result, they behave well and make good progress.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported. They make good progress from their starting points. The school has developed a particular expertise in supporting those pupils on the autistic spectrum. This has been recognised by the local authority, which is opening a specialist autism resource base at the school next year. The school takes a holistic view of pupils' needs. All staff have benefited from training with the National Autism Trust. Parents said that they find the regular network meetings with other parents help them to cope at home and support their children's learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils across all key stages have frequent opportunities to practise problem solving in mathematics
- all pupils develop a love of reading and more-able readers are encouraged to choose more challenging texts
- priorities for improvement, staff training and action plans are more strategically coordinated
- there is a continued focus on improving attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities
- governors continue to develop their skills to challenge leaders more effectively.

I am copying this letter to the acting chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Solihull. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jane Spilsbury
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher at the beginning of the day. We discussed your school evaluation document and the school development plan. We agreed the key lines of enquiry for the inspection, which were informed by my pre-inspection analysis and our discussions. We also agreed the inspection activities.

We jointly visited lessons in Year 6, Year 2 and both Reception classes.

I met with the acting chair of governors, two other governors and a governor support adviser. I also met with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the inclusion team and leaders of English, mathematics and the early years.

I reviewed the school's single central record and discussed the school's safeguarding practice with the designated senior leader. I asked pupils in lessons about whether they feel safe.

I reviewed a number of other school documents, including governing body minutes, assessment information and current attendance figures.

I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I also spoke to two parents individually and took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, including 27 free-text responses.

I listened to pupils read, looked at their reading record books and their writing and mathematics books. I also asked them for their views on school life.

I took account of 104 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and 42 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.