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Mr Carl Lewis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Lewis

### **Short inspection of Water Orton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 September 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 October 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leadership team and governors provide effective leadership and have formed very positive relationships with families and the local community.

The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as those I spoke with, paid tribute to the work and commitment of your staff. Summing up the views of most parents, one stated, 'Everyone really cares, and they never give up on any child.' This is very true and is also reflected in the excellent care and attention the staff provide for pupils in Evergreen, the resourced provision for pupils who have autism and communication and interaction difficulties. This provision is a significant strength, reflecting the school's commitment to providing an inclusive education for all pupils, whatever their needs and abilities.

The previous inspection, in October 2014, highlighted some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the need to improve pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Much has been done since then. Children in the early years are achieving better and more pupils across the school are reaching age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. In key stage 1, standards have improved, and across the school, the quality of pupils' writing is improving.

Your evaluations and those of leaders and governors are accurate. Leaders recognise, rightly, that the quality of teaching remains effective but there are

inconsistent expectations for pupils' work and progress in some key stage 2 classes. I understand that staffing difficulties and instability have partly contributed to these inconsistencies. You and the governing body are managing the temporary disruption to staffing by deploying the most effective teachers to work with other staff. This must continue so that teachers and support staff see and share best practice. Evidence from our visits to lessons, work in pupils' books and the discussions I had with pupils show that they make good progress in key stage 2, but that the most able pupils could still be doing better in reading and mathematics.

Staff value pupils' work and efforts. This is evident in the range of work in pupils' books and in displays of their work around the school. The work in topic books and special projects reflect a range of educational visits to local places of interest that develop pupils' interest and curiosity about history, science and geography. You and your staff have been successful in maintaining a stimulating curriculum that promotes British values of tolerance, respect and care. The school's inclusive values and its close partnership with the local church are having a positive impact on pupils' academic and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils are very well behaved and attentive in lessons and at breaktimes. They show positive attitudes to their work and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their good attendance and punctuality. The Year 6 pupils I spoke with are clearly proud of their school and the opportunities they have to become house captains, school councillors and play buddies to support younger children.

During discussions with pupils about their work, I could see very clearly that the quality of their writing is improving well. However, they do not read widely enough in school or at home. This limits their use of vocabulary when writing independently. Although you and school leaders have, rightly, included extended writing as a priority in the school's actions plans, these do not focus enough on the most relevant actions that will help pupils improve their reading and writing. More work is still needed to encourage pupils to read widely and often to help them make sustained progress in their writing and use of vocabulary.

The deputy headteacher has good oversight of assessment information as a result of the regular reviews of pupils' progress that leaders and staff carry out. This assessments information shows that too few pupils in key stage 2 exceed age-related standards by the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics. We could see, for example when visiting lessons together, that the work provided for the most able pupils in mathematics is sometimes not challenging enough. Leaders are aware of this and it is reflected in the priorities set out in the school's improvement plans. However, the plans themselves include too many tasks and actions. This makes it difficult for leaders and staff to focus on the actions that will bring about sustained improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff vetting and checking systems are rigorous and fit for purpose. All the parents I spoke with

agree that pupils are safe in school and are very well cared for by the staff. Senior leaders, staff and those with specific responsibility for managing safeguarding procedures keep robust records if any concerns are raised about pupils' well-being and safety.

You and the staff adopt both a caring and robust approach to following up absenteeism and making sure pupils are safe when not in school. The staff treat pupils and families with dignity and respect, including the most vulnerable pupils in Evergreen. There are well-defined and clear referral procedures so that teaching, support, administrative and ancillary staff are aware of whom to go to if they are concerned about a child's welfare or safety.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and staff have maintained the school's positive ethos and make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils are happy and safe in school. They arrive at school in the morning, keen to meet their friends and ready for their lessons. One child told me, 'I have lots of friends because this is a very caring and friendly school.' Others in the group, as well as all the parents I spoke with, agreed.
- You and your deputy headteacher have adopted a range of strategies to improve teaching. Leaders and governors are managing staff changes and recent instability well. There is also good potential to continue utilising the most effective teachers so that staff can see and share best practice. For example, recognising that pupils in key stage 2 could be doing better, leaders deployed the strongest teachers to work with others to improve staff performance and pupils' learning. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough, particularly for the most able pupils in key stage 2. We noticed that in some lessons we observed together, teachers were not adapting tasks or asking questions to deepen pupils' understanding. In contrast, examples of the best practice were observed in Years 2 and 5. Here teachers prompted pupils to focus on the core learning for the day and then probed further to get pupils to 'think, solve and explain' the methods they used when solving mathematics problems. This encouraged pupils to think hard and apply what they had learned.
- Most children join the school in the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are typical of their ages. They make good progress and the large majority reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Early years provision has continued to improve since the previous inspection. This lays good foundations for pupils when they transfer into key stage 1. Pupils' achievement in early reading, phonics, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 shows that teaching has also remained effective since the previous inspection.
- The work in pupils' books, particularly their independent writing, shows improvement. This represents good progress since the previous inspection. You and your senior and middle leaders are, rightly, focusing on improving writing still further so that pupils write more at length independently for sustained periods in lessons. Handwriting, spelling and the structure of pupils' writing improves well as they progress through the school.

- You and your staff have maintained a stimulating curriculum. Special themes, projects and the celebration of traditional or religious festivals energise and motivate pupils. These and other rich and stimulating experiences are reflected in good-quality displays of art, writing and records of special visits to places of interest. Sport, physical education, music and the performing arts are strong features of the school's curriculum. In Year 6, for example, pupils shared with me their recent experiences of studying Macbeth. The school has strong links with the Shakespeare Foundation. Pupils at lunchtime told me how much they enjoy sports and games and that the school is very successful in team sports.
- Religious and cultural diversity is well supported by projects about the history and traditions of the local church and studies about major events, such as when pupils celebrate Remembrance Day each year. Religious education incorporates all the world's major faiths and customs. Pupils develop a good understanding and appreciation of diversity which prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Good provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been maintained since the previous inspection. The addition of the highly effective resourced provision, Evergreen, has further enhanced the school's SEN provision. The inclusion leader and staff in Evergreen are highly skilled and effective in supporting pupils who have autism and communication and interaction difficulties. I met some of the pupils briefly in the setting and could see that they are making great progress developing their communication and social skills.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and relative weaknesses in the school. The partnership with other schools across the Kingsbury and Coleshill consortium enables leaders and staff to check and moderate assessments of pupils' work and progress. This helps leaders to evaluate pupils' achievements accurately. Leaders have identified the right priorities for improvement in their action plans. The school improvement plan, however, includes too many actions and tasks to be completed each term. It is, therefore, difficult for leaders and governors to gauge which actions are going to have most effect on sustaining improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue focusing on improving teaching and pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 by:
  - making sure that teachers in all classes provide the right level of challenge in lessons for pupils who are capable of exceeding age-related standards
  - encouraging pupils to read more widely and often, so they experience a broader range of books, genres and authors
  - setting tasks and posing questions in mathematics lessons that help pupils to learn in greater depth
  - enabling teachers and support staff to see and share the best practice that already exists in the school.

- they focus more on the actions set out in school improvement plans that will have the most impact in bringing about sustained improvements to teaching and learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the inclusion manager who leads provision at the on-site specialist resourced provision, Evergreen, for pupils who are autistic and have communication and interaction difficulties. I had two meetings with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a learning improvement officer, who is commissioned by the school to provide support and professional development on behalf of Warwickshire local authority.

Together with the deputy headteacher, you and I visited classes to observe teaching. We looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils during lessons. I also spoke to a group of pupils in the afternoon and they kindly shared with me examples of their work, discussed the progress they are making and their views about the school. I spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and considered the results of the 92 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.

I scrutinised the school's improvement plans and priorities. During meetings we discussed how leaders and governors monitor and check the quality and effectiveness of teaching. You and the deputy headteacher shared with me leaders' own evaluations of the school's work and assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. I checked staff vetting and safeguarding procedures to determine whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.