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Elizabeth Hunt
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hunt

Short inspection of Woodcote Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 December 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 and your very adept deputy headteacher have worked with great determination and effort to develop key areas of the school to ensure that the quality of education is good, particularly in reading. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of changes in staffing and the governing body. These have strengthened leadership and the quality of education. You, other leaders and the governors have an accurate and reflective view of the school's strengths and priorities. Adults demonstrate high levels of care for the pupils, and relationships are highly positive around the school. Parents and carers hold you in high regard and recognise the impact that your actions have had.

Staff who are new to the school are supported to learn the school's systems quickly. This means that the approaches you use to help pupils are delivered with a good level of consistency. Pupils are polite, well mannered and confident, both inside and outside the classroom. They move around the school sensibly and open doors for adults and for their peers. Pupils are supportive of each other and work well together in the classroom, for example when discussing their learning together with a partner.

At the previous inspection in 2014, inspectors asked the leadership team to improve the teaching of reading and phonics and to consistently challenge all pupils to do

their best. You have worked diligently to raise the standards of reading and phonics in the school. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage has improved to be in line with that seen nationally. In 2018, provisional results suggest further improvements have been made for those pupils working at the higher standard at the end of each key stage. Through raising adults' expectations of pupils, you have created a culture where pupils feel that it is acceptable to make mistakes as part of their learning process. This was particularly evident in upper key stage 2, where I watched pupils work attentively in lessons and where teachers quickly adapted their tasks when pupils found the work too easy. This ensured that they were always fully challenged. It was also clear from pupils' books that teachers ensured that pupils made good progress during their time at school. However, we agreed that there are still some weaknesses in the curriculum in mathematics and in the teaching of English in lower key stage 2.

Many parents expressed their support for you, the leadership team and the teaching staff. Comments such as 'brilliant', 'friendly', 'supportive' and 'always listening to pupils and parents' were expressed by parents, including a statement from one parent who commented on the headteacher being 'my kind of woman, as she has brought the fun back into learning'. The vision of 'learning, caring, sharing' is central to everything that the school does. Pupils like being at school and they told me that they enjoy their lessons and are confident that they are making good progress. They particularly appreciate the range of sporting activities provided. This was evident from the number of pupils of various ages coming to school early to run with the staff in the daily 'run a mile' scheme. Pupils in Year 6 told me that transition into secondary school was 'not scary' as they had opportunities to see and experience their school first-hand, as the school is in close proximity to the secondary-school site.

Safeguarding is effective.

As designated safeguarding lead, you have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. You carry out thorough checks when recruiting new staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff, including those new to the school, know and follow the school's policies and procedures well to report any concerns they identify about pupils' welfare or well-being. Staff know exactly what to do should they have any concerns about a pupil or another member of staff. You provide staff with relevant safeguarding training and update them throughout the year to ensure that they are kept aware of important safeguarding information. Governors make regular checks to ensure that the single central record of recruitment checks, the policies and the procedures are up to date.

Pupils express their confidence in adults at the school. They are confident that their concerns are followed up quickly by staff and are dealt with effectively. Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They eagerly describe the way staff support them to stay safe online, especially on gaming sites. Every parent who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their child is safe in school.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the lines of enquiry we would focus on. Our first line of enquiry was to ascertain how leaders are ensuring that pupils of prior average ability are challenged in writing and mathematics. In 2017, while pupils' attainment was broadly in line with or above national averages, the progress that pupils made by the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. Improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment means that current pupils are beginning to make better progress. This is particularly the case in writing.
- There is a good range of opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. Where writing was observed, pupils of middle ability are generally supported well. The most able pupils are given good opportunities, through well-planned activities, to extend their writing. For example, this was evident in upper key stage 2, where pupils were challenged well and knew what to do to improve their work in writing using a purple pen. This was also clear in pupils' books, where teachers supported pupils to make good progress. However, teaching of writing at lower key stage 2 has not helped some pupils with average prior attainment to make progress fast enough. Writing tasks at this key stage sometimes lacked challenge and some errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation were not addressed.
- Over time, pupils' progress in mathematics has not been as strong as in English. For example, teaching of mathematics in lower key stage 2 is not sufficiently effective. Books showed that mathematical concepts were not embedded before learning was moved on. Better practice was seen in upper key stage 2, where we watched pupils work attentively in mathematics lessons and where teachers adapted their teaching through engaging activities to ensure that pupils were always fully challenged. Scrutiny of books showed that the teaching of number is particularly strong but not enough attention is given to embedding and further developing mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- As part of the inspection activity, I wanted to find out how effectively you use pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Assessment information showed that the progress of these pupils was below the expected standards in reading and writing. You have identified this through the regular checks that you make on pupils' progress. Leaders have put in place targeted additional teaching strategies to support these pupils. Leaders are beginning to hold detailed discussions with teachers about how to support these pupils. As a result, provisional information in key stage 2 shows that disadvantaged pupils have made better progress.
- We agreed as a key line of enquiry to explore the strategies that leaders and managers use to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in English, mathematics and the early years. Leaders frequently check that teachers plan activities effectively for pupils in their class. Through observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' books, leaders are supporting teachers to focus more on challenging pupils to do their best. You and the leadership team remain focused on increasing the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards by the end of Year 6. However, there are still weaknesses in the leadership of

mathematics, including the monitoring and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in this curriculum area.

- I wanted to find out if leaders of the early years were sufficiently challenging the most able children. The proportion of children exceeding the early learning goals for writing and mathematics was below the national average in 2017. When we visited the Reception class, we watched children making independent learning choices. They were working enthusiastically on their activities and were very articulate and animated in describing what they were doing. The environment is well organised and allows the children to develop high levels of independence. Teaching is informed and led by an adept leader who has a good understanding of the early years curriculum and of how young children learn best. Books and records of children's work showed a good range of opportunities for the most able children to be developed. The knowledge and skills children develop in these areas prepare them very well for their work in Year 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are sustained by:
 - effectively sharing good practice across the school
 - improving writing for the middle-ability pupils, particularly at lower key stage 2
- the quality of the curriculum in mathematics is improved so that pupils are given frequent opportunities to solve problems and use their reasoning skills throughout the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Mineza Maher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy, your mathematics subject leader and your early years leader. I also spoke to four governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke over the telephone to a representative of the local authority. I met with 12 pupils from across key stages 1 and 2 and spoke informally with other pupils during breaktimes and lessons. I visited classes with you, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I took account of 27 free-text responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online

questionnaire. I also met with parents before school. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, records of school assessments, records of monitoring of teaching and pupils' behaviour logs. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, staff training records, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.