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Mrs Louisa Gurney
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gurney

Short inspection of Woodley Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 November 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 have a clear vision to balance the nurturing Christian ethos of the school with pupils' academic learning. Staff share your ambition. They work well together and are committed to the school's mission statement of 'inspiring hearts and minds'.

Pupils are very happy at Woodley Primary School. I observed courteous and respectful behaviour across the school and pupils told me that this is typical. They like the renewed focus on reading and told me that their reading gets better when they complete their home reading. They like the way that their teachers 'really know' them and will suggest new books for them to read. They are very enthusiastic about their 'afternoon lessons' and the linked home learning projects, although some did admit to having rather too much parental support when making their models of First World War trenches. This has clearly been addressed by leaders because pupils also told me that their teachers need to know what pupils themselves can do so that 'they can help us better'.

Pupils' 'afternoon lessons' and special topic days are planned carefully by leaders and teachers to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum diet. This is successful, and pupils are clearly inspired by the ways that science and the wider curriculum are taught. The many extra-curricular activities, including the Year 6 residential trip, help to develop pupils' personal and social skills well.

The majority of parents and carers are also happy with Woodley. Many described it as 'caring' and 'a family' and explained how all staff work hard to make sure that pupils are happy. A minority raised concerns about leaders' communication, but several praised this, especially the recently launched 'Friday Forecast'. Others highlighted the availability of staff at classroom doors at the start and end of every day as a routine that they find valuable.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed well. You have taken quick action to address weaknesses, prioritising improving pupils' progress in reading and mathematics across the school. Your work to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning has been hampered by staffing turbulence. You have dealt well with this ongoing challenge, but you and other leaders have had to take on extra responsibilities and teaching to make sure that pupils' learning is not hindered. Consequently, your improvement plans have not been fully realised and have not yet made the difference intended.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Recruitment processes are undertaken well and checks regarding the suitability of adults to work with children are recorded carefully. Staff know pupils very well and are alert to the slightest change that might indicate a cause for concern. They follow the school's systems well, passing on any worries swiftly. Leaders work well with external agencies and are persistent when checking that planned actions and support have been effective.

Pupils feel safe and told me that there are always members of staff to talk to if they have any worries. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and recognise potential risks, including when online.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I considered how well leaders had addressed the decline in pupils' progress in reading and mathematics in national key stage 2 tests. I found that the majority of current pupils make good progress in these subjects. Upper key stage 2 pupils' books show that they are currently making strong progress in reading and mathematics. Nevertheless, there is still much ground to make up after the slow progress in previous years. Leaders have devised well-considered plans to accelerate pupils' progress, especially in reading. Early indications show that pupils are catching up and closing previous gaps in their learning. However, it is too early to demonstrate the impact of this work.
- Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has also been strengthened by leaders' work to improve the quality of teaching. This has been successful overall. Leaders have supported teachers well. Leaders have worked closely with teachers and provided personalised professional development that has helped

individuals to improve rapidly. Throughout the school, there is a culture of sharing and a strong sense of purpose. Leaders routinely plan and jointly teach lessons with classroom teachers to model different approaches. This has been successful in helping to share effective strategies and improving the quality of teaching overall.

- I explored how leaders use the pupil premium funding and found that it makes a very positive difference to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. You and the 'pupil-premium champion' know all the eligible pupils and their families exceptionally well. You have used this knowledge to identify and understand the barriers to learning that these pupils experience. Working with families, you have devised a wide range of successful strategies that support these pupils well and help them to make strong progress across the curriculum. Case studies and school information indicate that these strategies have been very successful. Parents are very positive about the support that their children have received, with one describing the work as going 'above and beyond'. The positive impact of this work can be seen on a case-by-case basis. However, it has not been formally evaluated, so leaders cannot provide clear evidence of which strategies have been the most successful.
- I also considered how well governors fulfil their statutory duties and hold leaders to account. Governors are dedicated and share leaders' ambitions for the school. They have undertaken a thorough self-review and created an action plan that has already supported them to refine and strengthen their focus. They have recently experienced many personnel changes and have taken the opportunity to recruit governors who bring a wide range of skills and experiences to the governing body. They have provided clear strategic support to you, especially during ongoing staffing difficulties. However, they recognise that this has distracted them from undertaking some of their statutory responsibilities, such as ensuring that the use of pupil premium funding is formally evaluated.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to improve the consistency of teaching quality across year groups and subjects, so that all pupils receive a quality of education that is as good as the best
- embed the improvements in pupils' reading and mathematics, especially across upper key stage 2
- formally evaluate the difference that pupil premium funding makes for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your deputy headteacher and, together, we planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I also met with other members of the school staff, including the assistant headteacher and phase leaders. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. With the deputy headteacher, I visited a sample of classes in the school to observe pupils' learning, speak with pupils and look at their work. I also spoke with pupils at lunchtime and met formally with the school council. I considered 86 responses to the online pupil survey. I met parents and carers at the start of the school day and took into account 48 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 23 written contributions. I spoke with staff during the day and took account of 36 responses to the online staff questionnaire. I also met with advisers from the local authority and the diocese. I examined a sample of pupils' work with leaders. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors and safeguarding, and curriculum plans. Additionally, I scrutinised and discussed pupils' progress and attainment and the school's self-evaluation and development plans.