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Mr Jamie Nairn
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Dear Mr Nairn

Short inspection of Wootton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 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 joined the school in April 2017 and understand well the strengths of the school and those aspects that require further improvement. While you are ambitious for the school, you have taken a careful and measured approach when making changes. You have ensured that your staff are suitably supported to put changes effectively in place.

The governing body has developed a more strategic role. The board has recruited new governors to fill skills gaps that were identified in its recent audit. Governors have increased their visits to the school to check how effectively leaders are implementing the school improvement plan. They talk to staff and pupils and report their findings at meetings of the full governing body.

Parents' views are positive on the whole, and most would recommend the school. They appreciate the many curriculum opportunities, the strong 'community feeling' and the supportive and approachable staff. One parent wrote, 'We could not have asked for a better start to our children's education; Wootton Primary has provided them with a wonderful foundation upon which they can build and flourish in the future.' Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) value the individual support their children are given to help them thrive.

The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are strengths of the school and they demonstrate a real passion for learning. They value their exciting curriculum and

the many fascinating trips and visitors, along with a range of clubs and sports, that enrich it. During the inspection, a group of Year 6 pupils spontaneously recited 'In Flanders Fields', which they had learned as optional homework linked to their current class topic. Pupils say that staff rarely have to refer to the 'consequences' system as everyone strives to be the best that they can. Older pupils value the many responsibilities they have, for example as representatives on the Wootton Parliament and the anti-bullying council. Pupils feel that they have a voice and this enables them to make a real difference. They are extremely proud to demonstrate the school's values. One child said, 'The values are not just words on the board – they are things we definitely show.'

In the previous inspection report, the leadership team was asked to ensure that pupils are moved onto more challenging work when they are ready and that they are asked questions which make them think hard in lessons. Leaders were also asked to ensure that teachers have high expectations and insist that pupils produce their best work at all times. Pupils told me that they always have to think and work hard in school and this was evident in the lessons that I visited. Teachers asked appropriately challenging questions and supported pupils to explain their thinking in more detail. Pupils' books, and their work displayed around school, show that they work carefully in all subjects and take great pride in their work. However, these raised expectations are only just becoming evident in key stage 1. In key stage 2, the most-able pupils are challenged to improve their writing, for example by using complex punctuation and grammar. However, they are provided with fewer opportunities to deepen their learning in reading and mathematics. Too few key stage 2 pupils reach the higher standards of which they are capable in reading and mathematics.

A further area for improvement identified at the last inspection was to develop the roles of new leaders so that they contribute to improving the quality of teaching. Following a dip in pupils' achievement in reading at the end of key stage 2, there has been a focus on improving reading. With your encouragement, this has been driven by middle leaders. Middle leaders trialled a new approach in their classrooms before cascading it across school. They have monitored the implementation and supported staff to achieve a consistent approach. Everyone at Wootton is emphatic that 'reading is the key to learning' and they are instilling a genuine love of reading and literature in pupils. The proportions of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading at the end of both key stages were above the national averages.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a secure culture of safeguarding pupils. Staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting pupils from harm. Good levels of vigilance ensure that any concerns are picked up and reported appropriately. Leaders are persistent in following up reported concerns and escalating matters where action is slow to be taken. You and the pastoral team work well with external agencies and counsellors to protect pupils who are at risk of harm. Thorough checks are in place when recruiting staff, and all adults are fully vetted to ensure that they are safe to work with children. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils say with confidence that they are safe and know how to stay safe. Year 6 pupils I spoke with explained how they learn about this throughout their time at Wootton. It was clear that their knowledge of how to stay safe is highly developed, as pupils recalled learning about road safety, bullying, online safety and dangerous substances. More recently, they learned about grooming and gang exploitation from workshops delivered by visiting experts.

Inspection findings

- In 2018, the proportions of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics continued to be above the national averages at the end of key stage 2. The proportion who achieved the higher standard in writing was also above the national average. The most able pupils are challenged to use more complex grammar and punctuation in their writing. However, the proportions of pupils who reached the higher standards in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 were average. Evidence in lessons and in pupils' work shows that the most able pupils sometimes are not challenged to make strong progress and achieve higher standards of attainment in mathematics and reading.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years has been consistently above the national average. Likewise, the proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is also consistently above the national average. This, along with the changes leaders have made to the teaching of reading, contributes to the above-average proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard for reading at the end of key stage 1.
- Until recently, teachers' expectations of pupils in key stage 1 have not been high enough for mathematics and writing. Pupils have not been taught basic concepts and skills in sufficient depth. You and other leaders have recently introduced a more structured and challenging approach to teaching writing and mathematics. Leaders are now making sure that the content of the national curriculum is taught in sufficient depth for pupils to understand and apply key concepts. However, this new approach is at an early stage of implementation and not all key stage 1 staff have received the relevant training to follow this approach consistently.
- You ensure that the pupil premium helps disadvantaged pupils thrive. The targeted support helps disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading and writing, overcome any emotional barriers to learning and participate fully in extra-curricular activities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the quality and consistency of the teaching of writing and mathematics in key stage 1 so that pupils make the progress and achieve the standards of which they are capable

- sufficient opportunities are given for pupils to deepen their learning and understanding, particularly in mathematics and reading, so that a greater proportion of pupils reach the higher standards of attainment.

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

Claire Stylianides
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, the early years and key stage 1 leader, two middle leaders and three governors. I spoke with several teachers and support assistants. I visited all classrooms with you and examined a range of pupils' books. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and during a group discussion. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, at a club, during play time and in lessons.

I took into account the 101 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day. There were 32 responses to the Ofsted staff survey which were also considered. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, the latest assessment information, a summary of the school's self-evaluation and its plan for improvement, and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.