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20 December 2018

Mrs Alison Wootton  
Headteacher  
Withymoor Primary School  
Gayfield Avenue  
Off Turners Lane  
Brierley Hill  
DY5 2BH

Dear Mrs Wootton

### **Short inspection of Withymoor Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 December 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 April 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2017, you have built upon the strengths that were evident in the school and made further improvements.

You have developed a positive, aspirational and inclusive culture based around the school motto of 'learning together, aiming for excellence'. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils and they have taken effective action to address the school's priorities.

Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and use this to inform action to further improve the quality of provision. Consequently, the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed.

As a result of effective monitoring systems, senior leaders know when pupils or groups of pupils are not making the progress they should. They quickly intervene to help the pupils to fill any gaps in their learning and support teachers to improve their practice.

Staff benefit from a wide range of training opportunities to help them to continue to develop their expertise. There is some very strong practice in the school and staff can learn from each other. Staff value the training opportunities that they are given.

Although not all teaching matches the best that can be found in the school, it continues to improve. Classrooms are vibrant learning environments and displays are used well to celebrate successes and to help pupils deepen their knowledge. Pupils are keen to learn and work well with staff and each other. Staff apply the school's marking policy consistently and pupils respond positively to feedback that helps them improve their work.

Subject leadership is underdeveloped, and outcomes have been inconsistent since the last inspection. Over time, key stage 2 pupils have not made enough progress in mathematics and disadvantaged pupils have attained less well than other pupils in most subjects. In 2018, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) made very slow progress in writing.

However, as a result of better teaching and decisive action taken by leaders, all groups of pupils are now making improved progress across the curriculum. Strengths in the teaching of reading and writing have been further developed and the teaching of mathematics is much improved.

Over time, pupils have thrived in the Reception classes. Pupils have achieved above national averages in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and in assessments at the end of key stage 1. Outcomes in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 have been better than those achieved in mathematics and a small number of pupils have won regional and national writing competitions.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are caring, thoughtful and confident and respond positively to high expectations. Staff, parents and pupils raised no concerns about bullying, but pupils are confident that staff would help them resolve any issues should they arise. Most pupils have excellent attendance. They enjoy coming to school.

Staff work well with parents and communication is good. The school's website contains a great deal of useful information that is easy to access, and school leaders are developing further electronic communication. Many parents attend events in the school and the vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school. Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. This aspect of the school's work is very well led and there is a strong culture for keeping children safe throughout the school.

All staff are well trained and kept up to date about safeguarding matters. Processes for reporting issues are clear and known by staff. Referrals are timely, and appropriate action is taken if required. Leaders and staff have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities and they follow up concerns

thoroughly.

Record-keeping is systematic, and information is stored securely. Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors and the maintenance of the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is exemplary.

Pupils, staff and parents believe that pupils are safe. There are established procedures in the school to keep pupils safe and pupils are taught how to stay safe in a range of situations. For example, they learn about water and road safety and pupils are taught how to stay safe when they are using the internet.

## **Inspection findings**

- The quality of teaching continues to improve and there is some very strong practice in all year groups, particularly in Reception and Year 6. When teaching is most effective, staff have high expectations of all groups of pupils, time is used well, and pupils are engaged in purposeful activities that help them to deepen their knowledge. Staff use questions and resources well to prompt further learning, teaching assistants are effectively deployed and staff model and insist that pupils use academic language. However, when teaching is less effective, activities are not challenging enough, and pupils become quietly disengaged. This limits the progress that they make.
- As key stage 2 pupils have not made enough progress in mathematics since the last inspection, leaders have correctly identified improving teaching and outcomes in mathematics as a key priority for the school. As a result of staff training, the teaching of mathematics is improving, expectations are higher, and pupils believe that they are getting better at mathematics. Younger pupils are now developing the skills that they need to be successful mathematicians at an earlier age. Work is appropriately challenging. Pupils' starting points determine the activities they complete, and the tasks get increasingly challenging as the pupils progress through the school. As a result, current pupils are making improved progress in mathematics. However, this is yet to have an impact on published outcomes.
- Since the last inspection, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 has remained lower than that of other pupils nationally. The most able disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as they should have done, and in 2018 disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made slower progress than others in the school. However, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 achieved well last year and current pupils are making much better progress than they did in the past. As a result of effective action, led by the deputy headteacher, provision and outcomes for this group of pupils are improving.
- Over time, pupils with SEND have made slower progress than other pupils. This group of pupils made very slow progress in writing in key stage 2 last year. However, as a result of strong leadership and improved teaching, pupils with SEND are now making better progress.
- Pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils were absent more often than other pupils in the past. However, the school's work to improve attendance, including

targeted interventions and close working relationships with families, have led to marked improvements for these pupils. The attendance of pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils is now similar to the national average for all pupils.

- Leaders are taking effective action to improve the school. The headteacher, effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, other leaders, staff and governors, is addressing the school's areas for development in a systematic way. She provides good-quality leadership and is helping other members of staff develop their leadership skills. Many aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding, the provision for pupils with SEND, and the use of additional funding, including the sport premium and the pupil premium, are well led. However, subject leadership is not yet having a similar impact to that evident in other areas.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in mathematics improve
- all teaching matches the best that can be found in the school so that all pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress
- subject leadership is further developed.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also considered 31 responses to the staff questionnaire.

The lead inspector spoke to three members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice-chair. He also met with a representative of the local authority.

Short visits were made to every classroom with the headteacher. The inspector spoke to pupils and observed behaviour in lessons and during social time. The inspector also reviewed 43 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

The inspector considered 54 responses and 31 free-text comments made by

parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the lead inspector looked at published information on the school's website.