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Mr Francois Walker  
Headteacher  
Whiteknights Primary School  
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Reading  
Berkshire  
RG2 8EP

Dear Mr Walker

### **Short inspection of Whiteknights Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 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 September 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, you have skilfully drawn together a highly effective leadership team, developed good-quality subject leaders and created a dynamic learning environment where staff morale is high. As a result, all stakeholders strongly support the changes and significant improvements you are leading. This sentiment is endorsed by parents and carers. One commented, 'The headteacher has taken this school from strength to strength.' Working closely with governors, you have relentlessly focused on improving pupils' learning, so they achieve the highest standards possible. This continual drive and ambition for excellence for your pupils reflect the school's vision of 'Growing Greatness'.

Central to your strategy has been the continual improvement of teaching. This has focused on making sure that teachers have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve during lessons. Teachers concentrate on how pupils best learn, by building on what they already know and understand, enabling pupils to make strong progress.

Pupils enjoy their learning and show high levels of engagement in lessons. This is reflected in their above-average attendance and punctuality. They particularly like those lessons where they have opportunities to discuss their ideas and explore their emotions. They learn in a caring environment that is tolerant and free from discrimination. Pupils appreciate that they are well looked after, feel safe and trust the adults who look after them. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, exemplified by one pupil's comment, 'If ever I need to talk to someone, there is always someone here for me.'

Parents express overwhelmingly positive views about the school. 'I feel Whiteknights is continually improving, making it so much better for the children,' was a typical parent comment. They recognise that the school is well led and managed, and agree that their children are well looked after, happy and safe. Parents feel very well informed about how well their children are achieving academically. One parent commented, 'I'm extremely satisfied with the progress that my children are making.'

During the last inspection, the following strengths were highlighted: good teaching across the school, pupils' enjoyment of their learning, improving outcomes, and the strong leadership in the school. These strengths have been embedded and improved further as a result of leaders' commitment to improvements. You were asked to improve writing opportunities across the school. You have improved pupils' technical ability by focusing on grammar and punctuation. This, together with increased opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects such as science, have developed pupils' vocabulary. As a result, pupils' progress in writing by the end of Year 6 has improved significantly and is now well above national attainment

Outcomes across the school in reading, writing and mathematics continue to improve strongly. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, in 2018, pupils achieved standards higher than those achieved nationally. Assessment information for current pupils, supported by the work in books and the learning seen when visiting classes, shows that attainment is continuing to rise across the school. Leaders are maintaining their focus on pupils' progress to ensure that these high standards of attainment continue.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong and embedded culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders rightly identify safeguarding as their top priority, ensuring that all pupils are kept safe from harm. There are long-standing and detailed induction procedures for staff and governors, strengthened by regular update training. As a result, staff are confident about the action they should take if a child protection issue arises. Procedures for protecting pupils are comprehensive and include induction and safeguarding training for all volunteers in school. Record keeping is meticulous and leaders meet weekly to ensure that all actions are effectively followed up, so that pupils and families receive the support they need. There are comprehensive vetting procedures in place to ensure that all pre-employment checks are robust to protect

pupils' welfare.

Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school provides a safe and secure environment for the pupils to grow and learn. The school is dedicated to protecting the most vulnerable pupils and families. For example, the school works closely with outside agencies and the Home Office to ensure that refugee children and their families get the support they need to do as well as they can at school.

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at the following areas: the progress pupils are making across the school in reading, writing and mathematics; how effectively the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils; and how well phonics is taught.
- Published progress information for 2018 indicated that Year 6 pupils made less progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. The detailed information and analysis you presented to me provide compelling evidence that these pupils made strong progress in reading. The disparity in published information was due to approximately one fifth of pupils missing the higher standard by one mark. You sensibly analysed the papers and identified a weakness in pupils' interpretation of some complex vocabulary. You have taken effective action to ensure that this area is now targeted throughout the school. Pupils are making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school and this is leading to higher standards for all pupils. This was confirmed both by the work seen when visiting lessons and by scrutiny of pupils' books. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain higher and make better progress than pupils nationally in 2018.
- The curriculum is highly effective in meeting the differing needs of pupils. The curriculum is very well planned, with skills sequenced across subjects, so that there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge in more than one subject area. For example, in Year 5, while learning about earthquakes in geography, pupils were also using their literacy skills to describe tectonic plates and their movement. This was then captured in their artwork, before using computing to change their work into a digital image. The work produced in all subjects is consistently high, and reflects the high expectations leaders have of pupils' English and mathematics work. Pupils' work in books and assessment information in other subjects, such as science, geography, art and computing, confirm that outcomes are of a very similar high standard. Pupils enjoy the wide range of learning opportunities the school provides, including the 'science lab' and residential trips in Year 4 and Year 6.
- The teaching of phonics is excellent. Staff have benefited from high-quality training over a long and sustained period of time. As a result, they are highly skilled in delivering an extremely effective programme that systematically builds upon what pupils already know. Pupils do not move on through the programme until they have successfully embedded their learning. This expertise has been externally recognised and the school is designated as a centre of excellence.

Pupils consistently achieve significantly above the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The whole school is benefiting from the formal introduction of phonics into the Nursery setting. A significant number of children in Nursery need to develop their language skills and the school's phonics programme enables the skilled Nursery staff to sharply focus on this area as soon as children enter the setting. As a result, a much greater proportion of children enter Reception Year with age-related language skills, enabling them to make better progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to seek ways to improve the progress of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

William James  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your leadership team and several members of staff. We reviewed your management structure and the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection. I visited several lessons to observe learning. I examined pupils' work, focusing on pupils' progress in a range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics. I held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to a local authority representative by telephone.

Prior to the inspection, I examined a variety of documents relating to the school. These included published performance information, your school's self-evaluation document and the school's website. I took into account 63 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered 59 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 30 responses to the staff survey. I considered a range of documentation, including documents relating to safeguarding and governance. I also met with a group of pupils to discuss their learning and views about the school.