

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 May 2019

Mrs Ella Palmer
Headteacher
Wootey Infant School
Wootey Way
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 2JA

Dear Mrs Palmer

Short inspection of Wootey Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 30 April 2019, 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As headteacher you have been instrumental in creating a positive place for children across the age ranges to learn and develop. Parents say that their children 'flourish' at Wootey, and that the strong values of 'happiness, respect and creativity' permeate school life. Many parents agreed that 'staff do all they can to help'. Staff are united in their view that the support they receive from leaders to develop their practice and shape the curriculum is of high quality. Pupils say that Wootey Infant is a great place to be. Comments such as 'the whole school is kind' and 'children make friends quickly' are representative of the feelings of pupils in the school.

This school nurtures and cares for all pupils extremely well. Pupils' social interaction demonstrates their care and concern for each other, and adults model a positive can-do attitude. You and your senior leaders give close attention to pupils' overall development as young people and their preparedness for life beyond school. Your deployment of resources and additional support is well considered and you have forged close links with a range of partners in health, social care and family support. Most pupils thrive and start the next phase of their school journey with the skills they need to continue their learning. Pupils' care and concern for others is exemplary. The school's 'silver learning code' and 'golden rules', reinforced regularly by staff, are clearly evident in pupils' learning and play. Pupils enjoy school and are able to take full advantage of the exciting range of experiences on offer.

Since the last inspection, leaders have strengthened teachers' questioning so that it deepens pupils' mathematical reasoning and supports pupils' understanding of key concepts. From starting points at the end of early years that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, pupils make good progress. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in mathematics by the end of key stage 1 is high as a result.

Leaders have strengthened evaluation of the actions taken to improve mathematics and writing, planning precisely and setting out more clearly what they are hoping pupils will achieve. Evidence from a range of documents, including additional funding plans, show that governors actively check that actions lead to improvements. Tangible impact can be seen, for example in the proportions of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2018, and the emerging strengths in writing, where proportions of pupils meeting and exceeding age-related expectations have increased.

In reading, too few boys, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), secure the expected standard in phonics. By the end of key stage 1, they do not have the skills they need to start the next stage of their education as well prepared as their peers with similar starting points. Leaders recognise the need to refocus improvement strategies in reading to address this successfully.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Recruitment records are maintained carefully, showing evidence that appropriate procedures are followed to ensure that staff employed or volunteering at the school have been appropriately vetted. Children who may be at risk of harm are well supported. Leaders know when it is appropriate to engage early help services, liaise with social care, health or other education colleagues and act with children's best interests at heart.

The curriculum provides plentiful opportunities to strengthen pupils' awareness and management of risk, particularly those posed online alongside risks such as fire and stranger danger. Pupils know why it is important to keep personal information confidential and to report any unusual online contact to a trusted adult. Pupils say that adults in the school respond quickly to their worries and that they feel safe and cared for. Parents also say that their children are safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- Together, we agreed some key areas to explore in detail. These included: leaders' strategies to reduce absence and fixed-term exclusions; the extent to which the reading curriculum meets the needs of boys and pupils with SEND; the quality of early years provision across the areas of learning; and leaders' choices for the curriculum in art and computing so that pupils know and can do more.

- There have been no fixed-term exclusions at the school since 2016. Strategies to tackle attendance have led to a successful reduction in absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Case studies for persistent absentees show leaders tackling absence rigorously, utilising relevant early help, family services and school nursing contacts to provide a coordinated approach around the pupils' families. Despite these efforts, some children miss school regularly and this is having a detrimental effect on the progress their children make.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading is in line with that found nationally, with a higher proportion of pupils working at a greater depth of understanding by the end of key stage 1. However, despite achieving outcomes in the early learning goal for reading above those found nationally, too few pupils go on to secure the expected standard in phonics.
- Leaders have identified gaps in pupils' fluency, such as being able to read key words at sight. They check how many they can read regularly and encourage pupils to read more of these words through a reward system. Pupils are not yet able to apply knowledge of the sounds they have learned to read at speed, drawing meaning from text. Pupils do not receive enough guidance about how to apply their decoding strategies in the context of high-quality texts. Sampling of guiding reading records and workbooks indicates that pupils have too few opportunities to practise and apply their reading strategies.
- Early years provides a stimulating range of activities, enabling children to make choices about their learning and apply their strengthening skills independently. Children practised writing and number skills, balancing marbles on golf tees, throwing Velcro balls to hit number targets matching numbers to visual images and recorded a tally to show the number of goals they had scored into the net.
- Children were able to extend conversations and ask and answer questions with confidence. For example, one child chose food for a picnic, checking with his friend, 'This looks yummy, shall we have this?' Other children hunted for numbers to complete sequences forwards and backwards from a range of starting numbers up to and beyond 20. Where necessary, adults intervened sensitively, using questions to extend children's thinking and check understanding.
- Leaders in art and computing clearly articulate the intended learning journey for pupils, showing passion for their subjects and clarity about how skills, knowledge and understanding are built over time. The curriculum is planned to help pupils use their knowledge across a range of subjects flexibly. Leaders have thought carefully about the range and nature of experiences, including the artists and designers that pupils will study across the key stage. For example, in key stage 1, pupils create printing blocks in the style of William Morris, creating historically accurate designs.
- Leaders support teaching effectively. In art, as a result, pupils' sketch books show strong links between the planned curriculum and implementation, with a growing strength in skills such as sketching and use of line and tone. Samples of pupils' independent computing work show how they are working confidently within the expectations for their age in this area.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching helps pupils to apply known sounds and age-appropriate vocabulary fluently when reading aloud and check their understanding of new words
- the reading curriculum offers regular opportunities for pupils to practise their reading accuracy, fluency and stamina using a good range of high-quality texts
- the progress of boys, including pupils with SEND, strengthens so that a greater proportion meet the expected standard in phonics and leave key stage 1 well prepared in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Abigail Wilkinson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you, other leaders, and seven governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. Together, we observed learning across classes in Reception and Year 1 and looked at a range of pupils' work, including online assessments of children's achievements in Reception. We scrutinised art sketchbooks and considered children's independent computing tasks across key stage 1. I evaluated a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement planning, safeguarding checks, policies and performance information. I considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 23 free-text responses. I also spoke to parents at the start of the day. I met with a group of Year 2 pupils. I took account of the views of staff through the 16 responses to the staff survey and considered the 130 responses to the school's own parental survey.