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Mrs Alison Rhodes  
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Dear Mrs Rhodes

### **Short inspection of Winnall Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 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 November 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your vision is for everyone – pupils and staff – to be the very best versions of themselves. Through your effective leadership, the whole school community recognises and shares this vision. You are passionate about every individual pupil making good progress, and you design school systems to enable this to happen.

Your focus is on continuous improvement. As one of the governors correctly observed during the inspection, you have a 'restlessness to improve'. Senior leaders accurately evaluate the quality of the school's provision. They use this information to identify areas in need of improvement. Leaders put in place suitable plans to tackle any weaknesses. Leaders and governors regularly check that these plans are having the intended positive impact.

Middle leaders have a sound grasp of their areas of responsibility. They play an important role in strengthening the consistency of the quality of teaching across the school. As they do so, they are well supported by senior leaders. They lead effectively on relevant sections of the school improvement plan, which results in improving outcomes for pupils. Because of growing leadership capacity, the local authority views the school as needing a low level of support.

Historically, pupils' attainment in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 was significantly below that seen nationally. Purposeful improvements in the quality of

teaching have ensured that this is no longer the case. For example, outcomes in early years last year were above national averages in most areas. Pupils' work seen during the inspection shows that attainment continues to rise in all classes to more closely match that typically achieved in other schools.

Disadvantaged pupils make progress that is at least as good as their classmates and often better. This is because leaders ensure that they benefit from high-quality teaching. In addition, leaders use pupil premium funding in a thoughtful and targeted way to speed up progress where this is needed. All pupils' progress is closely checked in regular meetings between teachers and leaders. These meetings focus on individual pupils who may not be making enough progress. You accept no excuses for lack of ambition for underperforming pupils and ensure that effective steps are taken to support these pupils.

The way in which you and other leaders support pupils' welfare is a strength of the school. You are committed to identifying and meeting the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. Leaders engage with families to ensure that any potential problems are addressed as soon as possible. The family support worker is effective in her role, liaising with other agencies and working directly with families.

Staff enjoy working at the school. This is partly because they benefit from your strong focus on their professional development. Discussions that I had with staff and written responses to the staff survey show that this is appreciated. Teachers often use their skills to support each other when improving specific aspects of their practice.

Parents are very happy with the school, which they find to be genuinely inclusive. They find teachers approachable and quick to address any concerns they might have. In the Ofsted parent survey, one parent expressed the views of many, writing, 'Winnall is a great school that is holistic in its approach. It has a varied socio-economic background and it is embracing of all. Pupils are encouraged to absolutely be the best that they can be.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors adopt a proactive approach to safeguarding, seeking to address problems before they cause harm for a pupil. They are vigilant in designing and implementing the school's safeguarding arrangements, which are fit for purpose. Leaders work closely with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable families receive any support that they need. Regular training for staff and governors ensures that safeguarding remains at the forefront of the school's work at all times.

At the time of the previous inspection, not all pupils and parents had complete confidence in the school's ability to tackle bullying effectively. Leaders have worked successfully with pupils and parents to clarify what bullying is. An open culture ensures that all pupils feel able to talk about any worries that they may have. Behaviour and bullying records are maintained diligently. Leaders analyse these records regularly to check that any incidents of poor behaviour are being addressed

appropriately. Pupils value the work carried out by anti-bullying ambassadors, a group of older pupils who help to keep everyone safe at breaktimes. Junior governors are currently working with a group of governors to further develop the role of the anti-bullying ambassadors. Children who I spoke with all said that they feel safe in school and all parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire agreed with this viewpoint. No parents who I spoke with expressed any concerns about bullying and pupils told me that it is dealt with well by teachers when it happens.

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look closely at certain areas of the school's work. In addition to the effectiveness of safeguarding and how well the school tackles bullying, we explored: how well pupils learn phonics and spelling; how well teachers challenge pupils, especially the most able pupils; and how well children achieve across the breadth of the early years curriculum. Three of these linked to areas for improvement from the previous inspection report.
- In recent years, phonics outcomes in Year 1 have been below the average achieved in other schools nationally. Leaders have made significant improvements to the teaching of phonics so that this is now strong in early years and key stage 1. In phonics lessons, pupils readily engage in a range of activities, using a variety of suitable resources. These give them lots of opportunities to practise and apply their phonics skills. They make good progress because of secure teacher knowledge and well-considered challenge offered to all pupils. As a result, standards in phonics are now higher than in previous years.
- Leaders have ensured that the teaching of spelling has a greater emphasis than previously across the school. For example, pupils' spelling mistakes are usually highlighted in their writing and pupils in key stage 2 maintain individual spelling lists. Standards of spelling are rising because of improvements in teaching. However, newly introduced approaches to the teaching of spelling are not yet used consistently in all classes. Some pupils do not have secure spelling skills, for example the ability to apply relevant spelling rules.
- Leaders have rightly identified that more pupils should achieve a higher standard than have done so in recent years. Through improved teaching and higher expectations, this is now happening. In mathematics, teachers routinely provide greater challenge for all pupils, including the most able pupils. Giving pupils regular opportunities to explain their thinking is deepening their understanding of the mathematical topics being studied. Greater challenge is also evident in writing lessons. Pupils learn to write confidently in a variety of styles, using a wide range of vocabulary. The most able pupils are able to correct and improve their writing independently.
- In recent years, leaders and teachers have greatly improved the quality of the early years provision. Learning, both inside the classroom and in the compact outside area, is organised in a structured way. This approach helps children to gain full benefit from the activities available to them. Teachers place an emphasis on developing language and communication skills, recognising that many children begin school with weaknesses in these crucial areas of learning. Teachers track

children's progress closely to ensure that they are all making sufficient progress. These improvements to teaching have led to better outcomes, especially in core areas of learning. Consequently, children are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.

- Teachers plan for the full breadth of the early years curriculum. However, leaders have not ensured that this planning leads to rich and plentiful opportunities for children to learn in all areas. Achievement in some areas of the curriculum, such as those related to children's understanding of the world, is not as high as in other areas, such as literacy.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- current initiatives to develop the teaching of spelling lead to consistently strong outcomes across the school
- early years planning precisely and deliberately develops children's learning across all areas of the curriculum.

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

Christopher Donovan

**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I had various meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the family support worker to discuss various aspects of the school's work. Together, we visited classrooms to observe learning, to talk with pupils and to look at their work. I met with two middle leaders and also with the pupil junior governors to discuss their views about the school. Four governors, including the chair of the governing body, attended a meeting with me to discuss the school's performance. I also received a letter from another governor, who was unable to attend this meeting. A representative from the local authority spoke to me on the telephone.

I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements and looked closely at a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement planning, behaviour records and various policies. There were 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 13 responses from parents to the Parent View questionnaire, including eight written comments. I took account of all these

responses, together with those expressed by a small number of parents who I spoke to at the beginning of the school day.