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22 March 2018

Mrs Anne-Marie Bailey
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bailey

Short inspection of Woodhouse West Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There has been significant change in the leadership team and some changes in the teaching staff, since that last inspection. You have led this change well. You became headteacher in September 2015 after a period when you were seconded to the school. Your deputy headteacher was new to role in September 2014, as was your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) in September 2016. Along with your two assistant headteachers, you make a strong leadership team in which you all know your responsibilities and the roles you play in school improvement. Subject leaders are empowered to take on responsibility for their subjects, as they take on tasks such as organising annual parent events and checking on the quality of teaching in their subjects. Many governors are very new to their roles but are not fully effective in challenging the school so that they can support rapid improvement. You work extremely well with other schools in your trust so that you can share expertise and support each other.

Since becoming headteacher, you have introduced a new inclusion class and your dedication to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunity to succeed is evident. This class meets the needs of those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. A carefully planned timetable ensures that pupils spend time in this class learning skills which enable them to learn alongside their peers when they return to their year group class. This inclusion team also runs a breakfast intervention class, which allows some pupils to have a good start to the school day, when they otherwise may struggle. The new behaviour policy is understood well by pupils and staff; parents, carers and pupils commented on how it has helped

improve behaviour in the school.

Since becoming headteacher, you have made sure that you and your team are always available to speak to parents. You recognise the important part that parents play in their children's emotional and academic life and the need for parents to understand that what you do in school is in the best interests of their child. Parents took the time to speak to me during the inspection so that they could comment on the good communication between home and school and the way in which the school has improved under your headship.

You and your team have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Although you have gone to great lengths to address the issue of attendance, improvements have not always been reflected in the efforts you have made. Other issues such as meeting the needs of the most able pupils and sharing your teaching practice with other schools have been addressed and have made a positive difference to pupil outcomes. You recognise that the progress of pupils needs to be consistently strong across all key stages. Your observations quite rightly conclude that the progress of younger children in the early years could be stronger.

Pupils are exceptionally polite and courteous. Pupils open doors for others, shake hands with visitors and wait patiently for their turn to talk to visitors. They mix well with their peers both at breaktimes and during lessons, in which collaborative work works exceptionally well as opinions are valued. They are very familiar with the school's vision of 'Aspiring to be awesome. Making every day build to a brighter tomorrow'. Pupils are proud to wear their coloured ASPIRE badges. They know that the badges represent high standards reached in achievement, support, participation, inclusion, respect and endeavour. They are proud to take part in assemblies in which they can share with their parents their green behaviour card awards. Pupils take on a range of responsible roles such as the play maker and library monitors. They were keen to tell me how they are trained to undertake such roles and how they enjoy them.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your safeguarding leads ensure that staff are well informed about issues relating to safeguarding pupils and that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Checks are made to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children and these are recorded appropriately. All staff know that any concerns they have about a pupil are valued and taken seriously, and they know how to communicate these concerns. Your designated safeguarding lead keeps comprehensive, confidential records on any incidents and concerns, and refers them to the appropriate authority whenever the need arises.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, particularly when using the internet. They know the dangers of giving out personal information online and that some people online may not really be who they say they are. Pupils told me they feel safe in your school. They know about bullying and the different forms it can take, but are confident that they can speak to an adult if they have a problem

and that issues will be dealt with. Pupils commented that they 'like school as we have teachers we can trust'.

Inspection findings

- The standard of pupils' writing across the school continues to be a strength, and the progress pupils make is consistently above that of other pupils nationally. You have ensured that, by working with the local authority and with other schools in your trust, the assessment of pupils' writing is accurate. It is obvious, after speaking to pupils and looking at the work in their books, that the exciting curriculum is hugely influential in the quality of writing they produce. Your curriculum leader plans the curriculum so that pupils learn through first-hand experiences and that topics are relevant and exciting. He also ensures that the topics pupils study firmly embed literacy and mathematic skills. Pupils studied pirates, from which concepts such as forces and coordinates became a natural part of the learning. Pupils in Year 6 wrote and produced their own film, which enabled them to further develop literacy and phonetic skills. Trips to London and a wildlife park give pupils first-hand experiences of the topics they study.
- You and your team recognise that meeting the needs of higher-attaining pupils continues to be an issue in your school. However, the steps you have taken have led to improvements in the number of pupils reaching these deeper levels of understanding, particularly in key stage 1. Since 2014, there has been an emphasis in school on firmly embedding and improving basic literacy and numeracy skills. As many more pupils now have good basic skills, this has enabled them to quickly and securely work at a more complex level, particularly at key stage 1 in phonics. Leaders at all levels have ensured that exemplar materials are available and working with schools in the trust gives a clear indication of the expectations for these higher-attaining pupils.
- At the last inspection, inspectors commented that pupils' progress speeds up towards the end of key stage 2. This is no longer the case. The assiduous and accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior leaders has enabled any weaknesses in the teaching and learning to be quickly addressed, so that the effect on pupils' outcomes is minimal. As a result, pupils now make more consistently good progress across key stages 1 and 2.
- The inclusion team has introduced several schemes and strategies to improve rates of pupils' attendance across the school. Despite this and work undertaken with the local authority, pupils' attendance remains below that of pupils in other schools nationally. Members of staff make early-bird phone calls to homes at 7.30am and 8.00am, pupils take home wakey-wakey bags containing alarms, flannels, soap and toothbrushes. Daily, weekly and termly awards are given, all to improve pupils' rates of attendance. Although some significant improvements have been made for some pupils, numbers of persistently absent pupils have not decreased. Leaders struggle to help some parents understand how important regular attendance at school is for their children's emotional and educational well-being. The local authority has supported the school well in its attempt to improve attendance, for example, conducting an attendance audit when requested by the headteacher. The local authority agreed with the inspector that

the efforts the school is making are exceptional, but with surprisingly little effect. Improving attendance remains a priority for the school, and leaders continue to carefully monitor attendance and the effect of different strategies and to consider different ways to inform parents and encourage better attendance.

- The governing body, although new, is well informed about pupil outcomes and fully involved in the life of the school. Governors are dedicated and enthusiastic about playing an active part in school improvement. They are highly competent in a range of skills that, it is anticipated, will help support the school as governors become more proficient in their governance roles. They have already been supported by the local authority, which has helped them begin to challenge the school leaders. The local authority has offered further support as needed. The chair of the governing body has introduced new strategies, such as having link governors who are taking on responsibilities for aspects of school improvements. These link governors are currently learning about their designated aspect of responsibility, but are not yet challenging the school so that they can play a part in strategic long-term improvement.
- Children start the early years with a range of pre-school experiences and at a level that is typically lower than that expected for their age. They quickly learn to communicate in a positive manner with adults and other children, for example, learning to take turns and communicate their needs. Children's interactions with adults in the school are generally valuable. The adults encourage children to extend their vocabulary, as seen during the inspection, when children were making houses based on the story of 'The three little pigs'. Children are happy and often concentrate for considerable lengths of time on one activity. However, children's progress is not always as fast as it could be, as the environment and activities planned sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to learn well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors develop their new roles further so that they offer the school leaders a deeper and more valuable level of challenge
- the early years leader plans activities and the environment more carefully to meet children's individual needs to improve their progress
- improving attendance remains a priority, and strategies are carefully monitored to ensure their effectiveness.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you and your deputy headteacher spent a great deal of time with me as we observed learning and behaviour in different classes and considered pupils' learning in their books. I met with many pupils and spoke to them about a range of issues, including the work in their books. I also met with a representative of the local authority, the curriculum leader and some of your governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke to several staff and observed pupils' behaviour at different times of the school day. I held a meeting with several parents and considered 30 responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and seven texts from parents. Fifteen staff responded to the staff questionnaire and 41 pupils to the pupil questionnaire; all these responses were considered. I looked at a range of documentation so that I could consider the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, leadership and management, pupil progress and your evaluation of the quality of teaching.