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Mr Andrew Mitchell
Headteacher
Woodloes Primary School
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Dear Mr Mitchell

Short inspection of Woodloes Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in May 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 certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You are highly ambitious for the school and have systematically and thoughtfully made changes to increase the capacity of leadership to fulfil these ambitions. The school has progressed significantly since the last inspection, so much so that you and your leadership team now provide support to schools within your local partnership. For example, the early years leader has successfully taken on the headship of a local school over the last term to ensure its stability and oversee improvements.

Since the last inspection, you have developed an effective system to track how well pupils are doing. Your system of using national curriculum objectives to measure progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science is effective in measuring progress. Teachers are swift in identifying when additional support is required. This information is used well to ensure that pupils are being challenged and are making good progress. We agreed that this now needs to be developed to encompass the wider curriculum.

Strong, effective leadership in the early years ensures that children make a good start to their school life. Expectations are high, routines are clear and tasks are well matched to the children's needs and interests. As a result, children make good progress from their various starting points.

The school has adopted a project-based approach to the curriculum, interlaced with the teaching of the skills of phonics, literacy and numeracy. Standards in these areas have greatly improved. Pupils stated that they enjoy the well-judged and lively curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. They are keen to learn and show strong learning behaviours in lessons. Poor behaviour and disruption are very rare. Pupils explained that, when they do occur, they are well equipped to be able to support one another. They are taught to respect one another's beliefs and the importance of showing tolerance towards others. One pupil remarked, 'We learn to appreciate each other, no matter how different we are.'

The school became an academy in 2015, and governors and members of the multi-academy trust are dedicated and committed to the school's ongoing success. They have a strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school from the accurate and comprehensive information provided by you. The trust offers a wide range of professional development opportunities, such as courses, meetings and workshops.

You and your leadership team have reviewed the wider curriculum because you were keen to make it more interesting and relevant to the pupils. You focused on increasing pupils' knowledge of their locality and on choosing books to inspire and reflect the area of study. Teachers ensure that they offer extended writing opportunities across a range of subjects, including science. Pupils apply their writing, grammar and spelling skills well in a range of different contexts so that they become confident in using them. In our observation of the wider curriculum, we agreed that it would benefit from an emphasis on challenging more-able pupils to deepen their understanding and improve their skills in areas such as history, geography and French.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, place the highest priority on keeping pupils safe and providing strong pastoral care. Six members of staff are trained as designated safeguarding leads, which means that there is always a member of staff in school to deal with any potential safeguarding concerns.

You and your senior team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. Arrangements for checking that staff are suitable people to work with children meet requirements. Staff receive appropriate training, and regular updates ensure that they are well briefed about potential risks to the safety of pupils. As a result, they understand the actions they should take if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare.

Children say that they feel safe, and they are taught, in lessons and assemblies, how to stay safe. Effective monitoring and filtering systems are in place to prevent pupils from accessing inappropriate material online.

Inspection findings

- I explored a number of key lines of enquiry during the inspection. My first line of enquiry focused on mathematics and reading. In 2017, there was a dip in standards for some groups of pupils in key stage 2 compared to 2015 and 2016. You provided convincing evidence to explain the sudden difference in the progress of the 2017 cohort. A change to the make up of pupils in Year 6 and a significant proportion of children who had special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities within the cohort had a marked impact on their final results.
- To improve reading, you introduced a text-based approach across the curriculum. You exposed pupils to high-quality texts to develop their comprehension and writing techniques. There was clear evidence in books that this is having an impact on improving pupils' achievement in both reading and writing.
- Teachers are actively introducing new and more exciting vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to read often. Highly effective teaching by teachers and teaching assistants is leading to current pupils making rapid and sustained progress in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills, both in word reading and in comprehension. I saw more advanced reading skills being taught effectively in key stage 2. The pupils I listened to enjoyed reading and read with confidence. The school's most up-to-date assessments show that a high proportion of pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged, are making good progress in reading.
- Progress across all year groups in mathematics is evident in pupils' books. You have introduced a 'mastery' approach, where pupils develop a deep understanding of each element of the mathematics curriculum, and you have found that this is working well. Pupils of all abilities regularly tackle challenging problems in mathematics lessons. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to probe pupils' understanding and test them further. Pupils use a variety of mathematical vocabulary accurately in their work, and they make good progress in developing their problem-solving skills. Inspection evidence supports your own information that these pupils are making strong progress in mathematics.
- Another line of enquiry I considered was how well disadvantaged pupils make good progress across key stage 2. This was because the proportion who reached the required standard in key stage 2 in 2017 had been lower in reading and mathematics than for the previous two academic years. The school's information showed that nearly two thirds of the pupils that are identified as being disadvantaged also have SEN and/or disabilities. From the range of books that we looked at, disadvantaged pupils including those who have SEN and/or disabilities are currently making similar progress to that of other pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are assessed with the same rigour in the wider curriculum as they are in English, science and mathematics
- teachers provide more opportunities for most-able pupils to gain a deeper understanding across the wider curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees (academies) and the chief executive officer of the Community Academies Trust, the regional school's commissioner and the director of children's services for Warwickshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Max Vlahakis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your leadership team, key middle leaders including the SEN leader and three members of the governing body. I also spoke with the designated lead for safeguarding and one of the deputy safeguarding leads.

I visited classes with you, where we observed pupils learning and talked to them about their work and their school. In lessons, we looked at pupils' work in books to determine the quality of learning over time and the quality of learning across the curriculum.

I met with two groups of pupils and spent time speaking informally with pupils in class.

I scrutinised the school's documents about safeguarding, including the record of checks on the suitability of each member of staff to work with pupils, and information relating to attendance and behaviour.

I also looked at the school's own evaluation of its performance and your plans for its improvement.

I considered the 48 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, which included 43 free-text comments, and the views of 21 staff and 82 pupils who completed questionnaires.