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Mr Matthew Kitley
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Kitley

Short inspection of Woodlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 April 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You are supported well by your leadership team and, together, have created a positive and nurturing culture at the school. Staff are proud to be part of the school and feel well supported by the leadership team in all aspects of their work. You have high aspirations for pupils and genuinely seek to overcome the barriers that pupils have to their learning. You do not seek to make excuses for situations which make pupils' learning more difficult. For example, you understand the need to improve attendance. Your work to address this is proactive and has been successful in improving the rates of attendance for some groups and for individual pupils.

Governors are supportive of the school and willingly give of their time to listen to pupils read. They understand that this is a key priority. They show a commitment to supporting the school in ensuring that pupils read regularly. This has developed pupils' confidence and enjoyment of reading. Members of the governing body are proactive in improving the range of books that are available and have an overview of the progress that pupils make in their reading skills.

Governors have developed good relationships with staff at the school over a number of years. However, they recognise that their ability to monitor the work of senior leaders more rigorously has been hampered by capacity this year. Governors have not been incisive enough when reviewing the impact of actions taken by senior

leaders to improve standards. They understand the need to develop their skills and have appointed new governors to ensure that this happens.

Your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is detailed and highlights the areas that are not as effective as you would like them to be. You have had success in improving the progress that pupils make in mathematics by the end of Year 6, and the percentage of pupils who achieve the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 continues to improve. However, issues raised in the last inspection remain, notably reading outcomes across the school and the ability of pupils to achieve a greater depth of understanding in all areas of their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are central to the work of the school. Leaders ensure that statutory checks are made and they adhere to safer recruitment processes. There is a pervasive culture of vigilance among staff. Crucially, pupils feel safe and said that they are well cared for by their teachers.

Staff understand how to apply child protection procedures. Training is up to date and this includes training on protecting pupils from the influences of radicalisation and extremism. Where there are concerns, records outline a clear chronology of action. Leaders work regularly with external partners and parents and carers to support pupils who are at risk. Indeed, leaders go to great lengths to maintain contact with families to ensure the well-being of pupils.

Pupils spoke positively of the personal, social, health and economic education they receive and have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They are welcoming, articulate and keen to share their experiences of the school. They recognise the value of respect and diversity. This is reflected in the quality of relationships that exist across the school, which are, typically, courteous, positive and cheerful.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry. The first of these focused on the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the progress that pupils make by the end of Year 6 in reading. We focused particularly on the progress of disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the most able. This is because their reading progress has been significantly less than that of their peers for the last three years.
- Staff have taken concerted action to establish a structured approach to the development of comprehension, inference and prediction skills. Teachers use questioning to develop pupils' ability to summarise and infer meaning, using a wide range of resources and genres to do so. This has brought a freshness and excitement to reading at the school. Pupils enjoy their daily reading tasks, which involve 'secret agent training' and 'mini missions' to develop their skills. Pupils

said that they enjoy reading now and value the incentives for them to do so. They know their individual reading targets, read a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts and can explain clearly what they need to do to improve their skills further. In addition, older pupils visit children in the Nursery to read with them. As a result of this consistent approach, there is no discernible difference between the performance of current disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers. Nonetheless, it is too early to see the impact of leaders' actions on attainment, and particularly to extend the thinking of the most able so they are able to demonstrate a greater depth of understanding.

- There is clear evidence that the support available for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is having an impact on the development of reading skills. For example, teaching assistants address gaps in knowledge skilfully for those pupils who fall behind. These sessions are structured carefully and, as a result, pupils are increasingly able to decode words using their phonics skills and expand their range of vocabulary.
- The second line of enquiry considered the effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points in early years and in key stage 1. Outcomes have been low for the last two years, and too few pupils go on to achieve a greater depth of understanding. In 2017, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was in the lowest 10% of schools nationally. The attainment of current pupils does not show the rapid improvement needed.
- Teachers do not plan routinely to support pupils to extend their thinking or demonstrate higher levels of understanding. Teachers' support for pupils who fall behind does not identify misconceptions and remedy gaps in knowledge or skills, which means that rates of progress slow. For example, pupils are not secure in their mathematical knowledge so cannot consolidate their skills independently or use their understanding to tackle more complex problems.
- For those children in the early years foundation stage who arrive with very low starting points, there is effective work to develop communication skills. Teachers establish positive interactions, which support children's ability to expand their vocabulary and develop their language skills. Children begin to form recognisable letters, numbers and words. The most able children can form simple sentences and can add and subtract single-digit numbers. To support reading development, parents are encouraged to 'stay and play', and many of them choose to do so. However, despite much work in this area, not enough children go on to achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- The final line of enquiry centred on the capacity that leaders have to drive the improvements required, particularly as they have been slow to resolve the issues raised in the previous inspection report.
- Leaders are committed to and passionate about the school and share a common understanding of improvement planning priorities. They have started to establish effective practice to address the areas of underperformance. They provide support to ensure that teachers improve their classroom practice. However, it is too early to see this work reflected in attainment. In addition, leaders' self-evaluation, while detailed, lacks sharpness in terms of the impact of the

strategies implemented.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors continue to develop their skills to enable them to challenge leaders stringently
- leaders' self-evaluation is developed further so that the impact of actions is outlined with more precision
- teachers' skills are developed so they are able to use assessment information to consistently plan work that matches the learning needs of pupils, challenges the most able and routinely identifies misconceptions so that pupils make more rapid progress
- improvements in the teaching of reading are sustained so that pupils make better progress from their starting points
- leaders continue to implement strategies that challenge effectively those who do not attend school regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah McGinnis
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the beginning of the day, I met with you and your leadership team to agree key lines of enquiry. Following this, I visited lessons and scrutinised pupils' written work across a range of subjects and age groups jointly with leaders. I met with members of the leadership team, curriculum leaders, representatives from the governing body and pupils. I spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including policies relating to safeguarding. When making final judgements, I considered three responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 24 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.