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Mrs Jacki Mitchell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Mitchell

### **Short inspection of Woodston Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 2017, 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 May 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff ensure that the learning environment is vibrant and welcoming. Your pride in pupils' achievements is immediately apparent through the high-quality displays and celebrations of their work around the school. You have developed a calm and purposeful school ethos with a focus on pupils' well-being and academic achievements.

You and your governors have managed effectively significant changes in staff since the previous inspection. During this time, the number of pupils who attend the school has nearly doubled, as you expand the provision. Recent leadership appointments have increased the momentum of school improvement. For example, you and your governors appointed the current deputy headteacher to improve teaching and learning in mathematics, which was an area for improvement at the last inspection. New and experienced leaders appreciate the opportunities you have provided for them to develop their roles and responsibilities effectively.

The sharing of good practice enables teachers, especially those new to their career, to improve their skills quickly. Teachers now have higher expectations of pupils' work and the progress that they make. This has enabled rapid improvement in pupils' handwriting and presentation. At the same time, leaders are ensuring that teachers and additional adults support pupils' learning well, so that all current groups of pupils in the school are making good progress.

Your pupils are proud of their school, respectful to each other and contribute to the welcoming ethos. They behave well in lessons and around the school because of the high standards of behaviour that all staff consistently expect of them. Pupils speak confidently about their friendships within school and the importance of supporting the many new arrivals to the school.

Parents are extremely positive about the school. Every parent who provided a response to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that their child is happy, feels safe and is well looked after in your school. A parent commented that their child is, 'encouraged and motivated, growing as a confident and competent young person', while another stated, 'my child comes home in a positive, happy mood filled with stories about what she has learned'.

You develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very well, in particular through the curriculum, where you use exciting extra-curricular provision to enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, we visited a Reception class, where pupils were sitting in awe while handling stick insects with maturity and care. Similarly, Year 1 pupils excitedly described their morning trip, and explained how a newly hatched baby chick learns to breathe. Your staff ensure that pupils develop very positive relationships with one another, and learn how to respect and appreciate the different faiths in your school, and in the wider world.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a very strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You and your governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a high quality. All staff place a high priority on keeping pupils safe and providing strong pastoral care for them.

Staff have appropriate training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. You are persistent when concerned about pupils' welfare, and work with external agencies as necessary. Governors regularly check that the safeguarding and child protection procedures in school are robust and up to date.

Pupils state that they feel secure and safe within school, knowing that adults will help them if they have any worries. Pupils who spoke to me understood what bullying is and said that bullying is not an issue in the school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different settings. They explain confidently how staff teach them to stay safe when using roads and the internet. Parents agree that their children are safe within school. One parent commented that, 'the school provides a safe, loving and secure environment', while another stated that any concerns are, 'dealt with instantly, in an efficient and professional manner'.

### **Inspection findings**

- In order to check whether the school remains good, one of the key lines of enquiry I explored was how leaders are improving pupils' achievement in reading and writing, with a focus on disadvantaged pupils and the most able.

This is because pupils' attainment, in both subjects, was lower than the national picture in 2016 at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

- Leaders, especially the literacy leader, have taken effective actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning in writing across the school. High-quality training for staff has ensured that pupils are being given much-improved opportunities to develop their writing skills. Pupils' books show a good improvement in this area. Pupils are now writing more complex sentences with a greater variety of vocabulary during literacy and cross-curricular activities, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able. As a result, pupils are becoming more creative and independent writers.
- Leaders have also taken quick action to improve the quality of reading, including the use and teaching of phonics. Phonics outcomes in Year 1 and 2 improved considerably in 2016, and were broadly in line with the national average.
- Leaders have also improved the ethos of reading across the school. Teachers ensure that a variety of texts capture the interest of boys and girls, and help them to develop an understanding of difficult texts to improve their comprehension skills through their guided reading logs. These tasks are challenging pupils' thinking, especially for the most able pupils. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their texts and read confidently and with enjoyment. The stimulating library and exciting reading areas in each classroom are encouraging children to read for pleasure.
- The school's focus on grammar, spelling and punctuation is improving pupils' skills. In 2016, Year 6 pupils' results were above the national average at the expected and higher standards. We agreed that pupils need to apply these skills more consistently into their written work across the curriculum to continue to support improvement in writing outcomes.
- You and your leaders are never complacent and correctly recognise the areas that require further improvement. Your work in raising pupils' achievement in reading and writing is proving successful, but you acknowledge that a greater proportion of pupils still need to reach the expected and higher standards across the school more consistently.
- I also investigated teaching and learning in mathematics because this was an area for improvement at the previous inspection. Mathematics is now a strength of the school. In 2016, Year 6 pupils made significant progress from Year 2; their results were in the top 10% of the country. Additionally, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected and higher standards was above national averages. At the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard was also above the national average.
- The impact of quality professional development continues to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers and additional adults in mathematics. Teachers follow a clear progression of mathematical skills across the year groups and use the school's calculation policy consistently. We saw pupils being challenged well, enabling all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able, to make good progress. Pupils were able to talk enthusiastically about their learning. We saw Year 6

pupils confidently working with each other, discussing how to calculate a variety of difficult reasoning questions.

- The only weakness in 2016 in mathematics was that Year 2 pupils' results were below the national average at the expected standard. You and your leaders recognise that there is still work to be done so that more pupils reach the expected standards, especially at key stage 1, and more pupils reach the higher standard across the school. You admit that there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects to deepen their thinking further, to match the success we have seen when pupils read and write across the curriculum.
- In 2016, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception year improved from 2015 results. My third line of enquiry sought to check whether these improvements have been maintained.
- The new early years leader is highly effective. He has ensured that children learn well, in a bright, stimulating environment. We saw evidence that early years children are making good and accelerated progress, often from very low starting points. A group of children started school only being able to make marks on paper with very few or no letter sounds. Some of these children can now form letters correctly and use their vastly improved knowledge of phonics to write and spell words correctly in simple sentences.
- Inspection evidence indicates that a similar proportion of pupils are on track to achieve a good level of development in 2017 to that in 2016, with many children making good or better progress from low starting points.
- Finally, I considered how well pupils are supported and encouraged to attend school. This is because in 2016 not all pupils attended school as often as they should. I looked specifically at the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These groups had particularly high rates of absence last year.
- Attendance is given a high priority in your school. A range of appropriate measures are in place to ensure that attendance is improving for all groups of pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils who are persistent absentees is decreasing. You, the school's learning mentor and the special educational needs leader work effectively with parents to help them improve their child's attendance.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to support pupils to apply their skills in grammar, spelling and punctuation, and in mathematics, across the curriculum so that a greater proportion of pupils reach the expected standards, and a larger proportion of the most able pupils reach the higher standards, in key stage 1 and 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Harrison  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- I met with you, senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- I listened to pupils in Year 2 and 6 read, and spoke with a group of pupils.
- I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the school's self-evaluation.
- I examined policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including mandatory checks and case studies about referrals made to external agencies.
- I visited all classrooms with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher to observe pupils' learning and scrutinise the work in pupils' books.
- I took account of the views of 42 parents who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. Parental views from the free-text service were also considered.