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Mr David Smith
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of Woodthorpe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 November 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 November 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 specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Woodthorpe Primary School is a vibrant, welcoming school with a strongly shared commitment, by yourself and all of your staff, to set high expectations for all pupils. Your aims state that together with pupils, you will 'be ambitious and take pride in your achievements' and 'achieve high standards in all areas of the curriculum'. These aims are fulfilled in pupils' work displayed around the school and in their books. You and your staff are passionate about raising academic achievement and providing a supportive and caring environment that enables all pupils, regardless of background, to flourish. This starts from the time children enter the school's Nursery through to the end of Year 6, as they make rapid progress to achieve standards above the national average.

The previous inspection report in November 2014 stated that the role of middle leaders should be strengthened to ensure that they monitor the quality of learning and progress of pupils more rigorously. Since the last inspection, you have skilfully developed strong and reflective teams of senior and middle leaders. This has resulted in effective leadership across the school that has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and to pupils' improving progress, particularly in reading and

mathematics. You have a clear and accurate view of the strengths of the school and those aspects that require further improvement. You and your staff know the pupils very well. You closely monitor pupils' attainment to ensure that pupils make the progress that they should in their learning. You quickly identify where pupils may require further support to ensure that they make rapid progress to meet and exceed the standards expected for their age. This has contributed to pupils exceeding the national averages in reading and writing at the end of Year 6 for the last three years and in mathematics for the last two years.

You and your leaders have developed teaching through key stage 1 since the last inspection. Pupils have made accelerated progress from low starting points to reach standards that are either in line with or above the national average in writing and mathematics for the last three years and in reading for the last two years.

Pupils I met during my visit told me that they enjoy coming to school to learn. They said that teachers, 'push us to our limit' and 'always challenge us'. Overall, they make very good progress from their starting points, while their attainment is also improving. At the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in the national standard assessment tests in reading, writing and mathematics was above national figures. For those pupils achieving a greater depth of understanding, the proportions were in line with the national figures in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in reading at the end of key stage 2 was above national figures.

The parents and carers I spoke with, and those parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were unanimously positive. One parent expressed the view there is, 'great leadership and a healthy mix between education and moral direction.' Another parent said, 'My children love going here and learning. They are both excelling in all areas of the curriculum with help from all the teachers and staff.'

Staff enjoy working at the school and express the view that there is a culture that encourages high aspirations for all pupils and staff. All the staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that leaders had created a climate in which teachers are trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for the pupils. This is manifested in the innovative ways that teachers have developed the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics across the school and in the school's approach to teaching the wider curriculum through topics.

The school's governing body is effective because it has a good understanding of how well pupils are doing and how leaders are developing teaching so that pupils' progress continues to accelerate. You ensure that governors receive extensive and regular information on standards in reading, writing and mathematics, relating to different pupil groups, in each year group. Information on attendance and pupils' care and welfare is also shared. Governors use this information to hold you and other leaders rigorously to account. As a result, they are assured that all pupils

achieve well and are kept safe. Governors are aware that absence rates are too high and are supportive of leaders' work with families to remedy this.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are a strength of the school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in and outside the classroom. They are polite and well mannered. In lessons, they listen carefully, support each other's learning and concentrate on their work. Pupils I spoke with were enthusiastic to talk about what they were learning and keen to show me their work. They take pride in the presentation of their work, which is evident in their workbooks, and which also shows that they work hard, learn from each task they do and make rapid progress. Pupils appreciate that staff care for them and keep them safe. This is evident in all aspects of the school's work, including the supportive and purposeful environment apparent in the breakfast club. One pupil said that of the three schools she has attended, 'this is the most caring school I have been to'.

Safeguarding is effective.

This is a caring school where every aspect of pupils' welfare is taken into account by staff. You and your staff, alongside members of the governing body, have established a strong safeguarding culture at the school. You and staff agree that the safety and well-being of pupils are the utmost priority. Staff are well trained and take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. Leaders have ensured that all arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare are very effective and record keeping is thorough. Leaders use the information that their safeguarding system generates to put support in place quickly for vulnerable pupils, which might, where appropriate, include working with other agencies.

Pupils said that they feel safe and know that if there ever is a problem, they can always trust teachers and support staff to listen and help them. They know how to stay safe on the computer and how to stay safe when crossing the road. There were no concerns about pupils' behaviour or their safety raised by parents. Parents share their child's confidence, that if they have a worry, they can come and talk to you or other members of staff. Systems are fully in place for the safer recruitment of staff, so that all suitable checks are completed. All documents are kept in good order.

Inspection findings

- I considered how you have strengthened the role of middle leaders. All leaders share your high expectations for teaching, so that teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop a higher level of understanding in all subjects. By creating teams whose members work together to closely check teaching, any areas that require development are quickly identified and rectified by your knowledgeable subject leaders. Subject leaders for English and mathematics show strong subject expertise. They have effectively coached teachers, so that the quality of teaching supports pupils to make outstanding progress. Pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics has risen, with the proportion of pupils reaching expected standards now consistently above that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils attaining at

higher standards in reading has risen over three years to be in line with the national figures in 2018.

- While standards in writing by the end of Year 6 have been above the national figures at expected standards for the last three years, the proportion of pupils attaining higher standards and rates of pupils' progress in writing have been more variable. Leaders have responded to these fluctuations by developing a whole-school approach to the teaching of writing. Even at this early stage of implementation, a scrutiny of pupils' writing and topic books shows that pupils of all abilities are making rapid progress, with many pupils demonstrating higher standards in their writing. Teachers' high expectations for the quality of pupils' writing are reflected in pupils' workbooks across all curriculum subjects.
- The leaders responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensure that these pupils receive effective support for their learning. Teaching assistants receive regular training and they work closely with classroom teachers to support these pupils. As a result, pupils with SEND have made similar progress to that of other pupils nationally from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Overall, pupils' absence and persistent absence have been consistently above the national average for the past three years. Leaders are working hard to improve attendance and regard improving attendance as a key priority for the school. Members of the governing body and of the leadership team stress to parents the value of regular attendance through letters and individual meetings with families. Weekly rewards and celebrations for good attendance are presented in assembly. Overall, absence has reduced marginally, but the proportion of pupils who are absent from the school, including those who are regularly absent, remains above the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's recently implemented approach to the teaching of writing is further embedded, so that pupils make rapid progress to achieve higher standards in writing
- they continue the work to raise pupils' overall attendance to be in line with the national average.

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

Christine Turner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, your leaders for English and mathematics, the special educational needs coordinator, the inclusion manager and learning support teacher. I spoke on the telephone to the chair of the governing body and spoke in person with the local authority representative. I met with a group of teachers and teaching assistants.

I considered 26 responses Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 23 free-text responses. I also took into account 27 responses to the staff questionnaire. I met parents at the start of the day and visited the breakfast club with you to check that pupils were safe, happy and well looked after. I accompanied you to classrooms throughout the school, spending a short time in each. I looked at samples of pupils' work.

I scrutinised a wide range of information, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance and plans for further improvement. I also considered information on how the pupil premium and physical education and sport premium monies are spent. I looked at a number of policy documents, including those for safeguarding and for supporting pupils with SEND. I looked at governors' minutes of meetings and at attendance and exclusion figures. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. I met with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and listened to Year 2 pupils read.