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13 July 2018

Mrs Sue Dymond
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dymond

Short inspection of Winwick CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since then, the school has undergone significant changes in leadership. The membership of the governing body and the senior leadership team has changed considerably. You, the deputy headteacher and the chair of the governing body are all new in post. Five new teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection. You said that the school has now entered a period of stability.

You joined the school in January 2017 on a secondment as executive headteacher. This role became permanent in March 2018. You quickly implemented plans to bring about rapid improvements to this school. Together with the staff, you have created a welcoming learning environment. The work of the pupils is held in high regard and displayed attractively for all to enjoy and celebrate.

Pupils told me that they are proud to attend this school. They spoke about the changes that your leadership has brought. They said that systems for behaviour management were clear and fair. Older pupils told me about the many opportunities they have to take on extra responsibilities. For example, they can become house captains or play leaders. Pupils spoke passionately about the many charities that the school has supported recently. They particularly enjoyed telling me about their school trips and the residential visits on offer in key stage 2. Pupils have a good understanding of faiths and cultures different to their own. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have completed some wonderful artwork and writing based on the

colours, dances and music of Africa. Older pupils told me some of the things that they have learned about Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of Fairtrade and how their work in school supports the initiative.

The behaviour of pupils around school is exemplary. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils who responded to the Ofsted survey were overwhelmingly positive in their views of this school.

Parents and carers are also extremely positive about the school. Parents who I spoke to, and those who responded to the Ofsted surveys, said that you and the staff were always visible and approachable. They particularly appreciate that you provide them with high-quality information well in advance to help them plan. All of the 58 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said that they would recommend this school. One parent, with a view typical of many, said, 'This is a great school that has gone from strength to strength and given my child a great education and prepared him well for high school.'

Governors know the school well. Those that are new have received a good induction into their role. Governors appreciate the scope and detail of the information that you provide them with. This level of information enables them to ask sharper questions to challenge both you and other leaders. Governors are aware of their statutory responsibilities and they ensure that all safeguarding measures are in place.

At the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. You and your staff make frequent checks on the impact of teaching, including through regular evaluation of the quality of work in pupils' books. This helps to build a picture of the quality of teaching over time. Clear systems are in place for teachers' performance management. You hold teachers to account for aspects of their work, ensuring that at all times the impact they make on pupils' progress is at the heart of the process.

Regular checks on the quality of work in pupils' books allow you and other leaders to keep a careful watch on standards across the curriculum. From observing in lessons and looking at pupils' books, we saw that work is well matched to the needs of pupils. For example, in a Year 2 English lesson, we observed the most able pupils quickly getting to work while the teacher and other adults worked closely with other pupils to guide their learning and provide support where needed.

Inspectors also asked school leaders to review the systems in place for teaching phonics. Results from the national phonics screening checks indicated that pupils' outcomes declined between 2015 and 2017. As a result, you have restructured the teaching of phonics. From observing in lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work and viewing current assessment information, it was clear that there have been marked improvements in this area. Pupils now benefit from well-structured sessions that are carefully pitched to meet their needs. Current assessment information indicates that pupils' outcomes have improved this year.

The roles of middle leaders have developed since the previous inspection. Leaders work with a number of partner schools to ensure that assessments are accurate through looking at samples of pupils' work together. They told me that they value these opportunities to engage in professional conversations with colleagues beyond the school. You provide them with the training necessary to fulfil their roles and to develop professionally in preparation for the next stages of leadership.

Safeguarding is effective.

As the designated lead for safeguarding you have ensured that a culture of vigilance permeates the school. You have made careful checks on the suitability of adults to work in school. You effectively share all safeguarding policies with staff. All staff and governors have received up-to-date safeguarding basic awareness and 'Prevent' duty training. Members of staff who I spoke to were well aware of the systems in place to safeguard pupils. You keep well-documented evidence of your work with partner agencies. You, the deputy headteacher and three governors have received safer recruitment training. Pupils, staff and parents who responded to the Ofsted surveys agreed that children were safe in this school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection I focused on several key lines of enquiry. The first of these related to how well children achieve in the early years. Since your appointment as headteacher you have focused your attention on the early years. Drawing on support from the local authority, you have ensured that assessments are now more accurate. Leaders in the early years now visit the eight feeder nursery schools to get more accurate information about the children who will be joining school. As well as this, you have introduced home visits prior to children joining. Children in the early years benefit from an exciting and well-resourced environment. There are many opportunities for them to develop their writing and mathematical skills. Evidence seen in children's learning journals shows good progress. Children are inquisitive and keen to share their findings. For example, one child took me to one side and demonstrated the correct way to plant a seed. Another child showed me their writing about pirate ships; they then demonstrated the correct method to jump from the plank of the ship into the sea.
- The next area that we looked at together related to boys' writing. Published performance information indicates that boys typically do better than other boys nationally. However, they do not do as well as girls at Winwick Primary, especially at the end of key stage 2. You have put a range of actions in place to address this issue. You sought the help of professional consultants to overhaul the range of texts that were used in key stage 2. The purpose of this was to improve the engagement of boys. This, along with regular checks on the quality of writing, is leading to improved outcomes. From looking at a range of books, observing in lessons, and talking to staff and pupils, it is clear that writing is improving. Current pupils' performance information indicates that the differences between boys' writing and girls' writing are significantly less this year. Pupils write widely and often, across a broad and exciting curriculum. Together, we

looked at writing in science, history, geography and religious education. We established that the quality of the presentation of pupils' writing was inconsistent. There is currently no planned strategy in place to teach handwriting. Teachers do not model handwriting well. We agreed that you need to set clear, consistent expectations for the quality of pupils' handwriting, ensuring that all staff model effective handwriting with clarity and accuracy.

- The third area that we looked at together related to the standards in mathematics in key stage 1. Pupils' outcomes in mathematics have declined in key stage 1 over the last two years, particularly the proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth. From observing in lessons, speaking to pupils and looking in pupils' books, we noticed that work was typically pitched well to match their abilities. Current pupils' performance data shows that they are doing well in mathematics in key stage 1 and the majority of pupils are making good progress. However, we observed that there were few opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills, extend their thinking and engage in problem-solving activities. Together, we agreed that school leaders should ensure that pupils in key stage 1 have opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems with greater levels of independence.
- During the inspection we also decided to look at attendance. The rate of attendance has fluctuated over several years. You have put clear plans in place to increase attendance and you follow up every absence rigorously. You have employed the services of an educational welfare officer and you issue fixed-penalty notices for unauthorised absences. Despite your efforts, the overall attendance figure for the school is marginally below the national average and the rates of persistent absence are marginally higher than the national average. Together, we agreed that this needs to be addressed further to improve this aspect of the school's work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- clear, consistent expectations are set for the quality of pupils' handwriting, ensuring that all staff model effective handwriting with clarity and accuracy
- pupils in key stage 1 have opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to reasoning and problem-solving activities more regularly
- initiatives introduced to improve attendance and cut the rate of persistent absences are implemented rigorously.

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

Yours sincerely

John Donald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with two middle leaders and two representatives from the local authority, as well as five members of the governing body.

Together, we visited classes in each key stage. We looked at pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning.

I reviewed the systems for safeguarding pupils in school and scrutinised the single central record. I examined the school's self-evaluation and development plan.

I considered the 58 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 30 free-text responses. I considered the 16 responses to the staff survey and the 55 responses to the pupil survey. I spoke to parents on the playground before the school day and I met with pupils throughout the day.