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Mr David Penkert
Headteacher
Woodpecker Hall Primary Academy
51 Nightingale Road
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Dear Mr Penkert

Short inspection of Woodpecker Hall Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2015, you have provided motivational leadership for teachers and staff. You have strengthened the leadership team and raised the quality of teaching through coaching and mentoring. You have strongly promoted the school's 'virtues'. These are well known to the pupils and are on display around the school.

You have worked successfully with governors and the academy trust to develop a thriving and rapidly expanding school community. The governing body and academy trust support you well. Leaders are reflective and know the next steps the school needs to take to improve further.

Pupils and parents speak of the school with pride and recognise its friendly and distinctive character. Parents and staff describe you as being approachable and welcoming. You maintain a highly visible presence during the school day. Parents say it has the feel of a close and supportive family.

The previous inspection report was written when the school only had three year groups. This is the first year that the school is full to capacity. As the school has grown, leaders have ensured consistency in the quality of teaching by monitoring lessons and providing clear guidance to staff. The role of middle leaders has been developed and these teachers are increasingly playing their part in school improvement. The school has successfully

developed a broad and balanced curriculum which gives weight to subjects such as geography and history and promotes pupils' creativity.

Pupils are happy learners and enjoy opportunities to take responsibilities around the school. They behave well in class, in the playgrounds and as they move around the school. The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils' work is proudly on display for all to see and enjoy.

Leaders know the school well and have identified the right areas for further improvement. These include the progress of specific groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. They also know there is further work to do to improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed, well maintained and of high quality. The lead safeguarding officer supports schools across the academy trust and ensures that the school gives the highest priority to safeguarding. Staff training and induction are thorough and kept up to date. The school knows its local community well and identifies specific risks and issues that may have an impact on school life. Governors regularly check the school's safeguarding records and leaders undertake their own safeguarding audits around the school. Close monitoring of safeguarding procedures ensures vigilance and full compliance with all statutory requirements.

Pupils say they feel safe and understand the need for safety when using computers and social media. They also know whom they should go to if they need to report a bullying or cyber bullying incident, for example. Pupils are confident that their concerns will be listened to and swiftly acted on. Links with external agencies are appropriate and case files show that immediate and decisive action is taken to ensure the safety of all children.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed the key lines of enquiry. Assessment information for 2016/17 indicated that lower- and middle-attaining pupils at key stage 1 made slower progress than expected in reading. Additionally, your own detailed analysis of writing showed that, in the previous school year, higher-attaining pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable. Improving reading and writing have therefore been key priorities for the school.
- Measures in place to improve standards in reading for all groups are having a positive outcome. Recent assessments indicate that progress and attainment are improving for the groups of pupils we identified. Teachers now lead guided reading sessions with confidence. Texts are well matched to the abilities of the pupils. There is a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics from an early age. Children are assessed on entry to Reception and targeted support is provided, closely linked to their needs. Outcomes in the phonics screening check in Years 1 and 2 show that pupils are making good progress.

- The school's work to improve both the quality and quantity of writing at key stage 1 is also proving effective, especially for higher-attaining pupils. A new handwriting scheme is helping pupils to write with fluency. The school's emphasis on creative writing is also bearing fruit. More time is being given for pupils to edit and draft their writing, as shown in the writing books that pupils are now using from Year 1. However, because only a small number of pupils achieved greater depth in writing in 2017, this remains an area for further development.
- We also focused on the progress of lower-attaining pupils in mathematics, as well as that of disadvantaged pupils. Lesson observations provided evidence of good levels of challenge, with Year 1 pupils applying mathematical skills in measuring length, for example. Effective support was provided, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school is reflective in its practice and had identified a need for pupils to write numbers directly onto squared paper in books from an earlier age. We saw the benefits of this in the way pupils organised their work, with younger pupils correcting their own numbers when they wrote them the wrong way round, for example. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics at key stage 1 now match or exceed those of their peers nationally.
- A further line of enquiry was the actions to sustain pupils' progress in key stage 2, making sure that the school's first Year 6 pupils are well prepared for secondary school. Assessment systems are well established in key stage 2 and the school accurately measures pupils' attainment. This information has been used well.
- The restructuring of guided reading sessions led by skilled teachers is having a positive impact on standards and pupils' attitudes to reading in key stage 2. The school's reading scheme provides real challenge in comprehension skills. Pupils talked enthusiastically about reading and most of those heard reading were fluent and confident readers. A love of reading is being well promoted in the school.
- Mathematics is being taught through a scheme developed by the academy trust. This focuses on developing pupils' problem-solving skills and providing more challenge for pupils across the range of attainment. Pupils are given a chance to apply their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as science and design technology. Pupils said that they enjoy mathematics lessons. Assessment information shows that the pupils in key stage 2 are mostly making rapid progress. Even so, the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth is not as high as it should be.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in writing in key stage 2 lag behind those in reading and mathematics. Some of the work seen in books is not of the standard required by the school because of poor handwriting skills.
- Finally, we focused on pupils' attendance. The high rates of persistent absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and of disadvantaged pupils have been key issues for the school for the past three years. There is now evidence of improvement. There is a strong team in place in the school as part of its overall support from the academy trust. An education welfare officer monitors and tracks attendance and absence on a daily basis. Attendance records are thorough and maintained to a high standard. The school is sensitive to the needs of its pupils and equally robust in challenging non-attendance. The impact of this team has been to reduce absence for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to

now match the national average. Persistent absence has also been reduced by a system of rewards and sanctions. School leaders recognise that there is more work to do before persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils reaches the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils' writing skills are developed to provide more time and opportunities to write at length, edit their work and achieve greater depth
- mathematical activities provide greater challenge in lessons.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Enfield. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sean Flood
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held discussions with you and other senior and middle leaders. I held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the academy trust. I spoke with pupils in class, in structured settings and in informal meetings. I also spoke to parents. I observed pupils' behaviour in class, in the playgrounds and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised pupils' work in a wide range of subjects. I heard readers across the school and spoke with pupils about the books they are reading. I also made visits to all classes alongside senior leaders. I examined the school's assessment records. A wide range of documentation concerning safeguarding, welfare and attendance was scrutinised. I also looked at behaviour and bullying incident logs. I considered the responses of 18 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys, as well as the school's own internal surveys.