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Sandra Osman
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Dear Mrs Osman

Short inspection of Donnington Wood CofE Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 last inspection. Although the most recent national assessment results for Year 6 pupils showed a decline in pupils' attainment compared with the previous year, they made good progress in relation to their low starting points. This is still the case for pupils currently in the school as the large majority make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school continues to improve because of your strong leadership and drive for excellence. This is clearly reflected in the responses by staff and parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire. They all agree that the school is well led and managed and are proud to be part of Donnington Wood Junior School.

Leaders and governors show considerable drive and ambition. You and other leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas which need to be developed further. More recently, you have changed the way in which the curriculum is taught to better meet the needs of pupils and raise standards. Additionally, teachers carefully check pupils' progress in all subjects. This has resulted in more pupils than before working at the standard expected for their age in subjects such as geography and history. Pupils' written work is of a consistently high standard regardless of the subject being studied.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to ensure that pupils knew their targets and how to improve their work. Pupils know their targets and enjoy having the responsibility to 'prove it' (their learning) when they feel they have achieved a target. Bronze, silver or gold stars are awarded against their target depending upon the quality of their work. All pupils aspire to achieve a gold star and understand that this means that they are working at a higher standard.

As a result of strong teaching and learning, attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were similar to the national average in both 2015 and 2016. However, in 2017, the school's attainment at key stage 2 in reading and mathematics was below the national average. You anticipated that this would be the case due to your more rigorous and demanding assessment systems. Your assessment information shows that this group of pupils had low attainment on entry to your school. Although the pupils made good progress from their starting points, some could have done better to reach the standard expected for their age.

Since September 2017, leaders have established further training for staff in the teaching of reading. Reading rightly remains a priority for the school and is clearly cited within development plans. The school can demonstrate good rates of progress for almost all current pupils from their starting points across reading, writing and mathematics.

The behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school. During the inspection, pupils were exceptionally courteous, kind and polite. Leaders track any incidents of poor behaviour and are quick to offer support where it is required. Pupils were confident to share their learning and talk about how the school teaches them to stay safe. For example, they could all talk about road safety and, in unison, recite the 'Green Cross Code'. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying, and knew what to do if this ever happened to them.

Since the previous inspection, 'Mini-School' provision has been set up. This provision provides effective support for pupils requiring additional help with their learning as well as providing behavioural and emotional support. It provides a calm but productive environment for some pupils during the morning session. During the inspection, pupils were busy investigating multiplication to an appropriate level of challenge. Adults used effective questioning to encourage pupils to explain their thinking.

Further work is required to ensure that strategies to improve pupils' progress that have been recently implemented are fully embedded. These include improving pupils' reading skills and ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged in mathematics. Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language also needs to be further developed to give these pupils better access to their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Keeping pupils safe is central to the school's work. Staff and visitors are left in no doubt about their responsibilities. Designated safeguarding leads ensure that records are meticulously kept, actions recorded and outcomes reviewed in a timely manner. As a result, children and their families are well supported by staff in school or by external agencies. At Donnington Wood Junior School, keeping children safe really is everyone's responsibility. The children, through their school council role, undertake site inspections to ensure that the school is safe. They have attended an external training session on anti-bullying. Leaders ensure that staff and governors receive regular and relevant training which reflects the needs and context of the school.

Inspection findings

- You have devised a range of effective systems and procedures to track, analyse and respond to trends in pupils' achievement. You have regular meetings with teachers to discuss the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils. You act swiftly to address any underperformance and identify appropriate interventions which allow pupils to catch up with their peers. For some pupils, spending a short period of time in 'Mini-School' with targeted support ensures that they are able to meet the expectations for their age.
- Attendance has improved considerably. In 2016, there were some weaknesses in overall attendance and in persistent absence for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Pupils' attendance is carefully monitored by the attendance team and they are relentless in their drive to improve attendance. In 2017, attendance was similar to the national average for all pupils and for all groups of pupils. If leaders have a concern, they liaise with families and other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and work towards improving their attendance. These procedures have been effective in improving attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The organisation of teaching in mathematics enables teachers to set work that is closely matched to pupils' ability and provides appropriate challenge. Pupils are encouraged to choose their own starting point and choose from bronze, silver or gold activities. In some classes, pupils were quickly moved on to more challenging work once they showed a good understanding. However, at times, the most able pupils were not moved on quickly enough to more challenging work which limited their progress.
- School leaders have rightly recognised that the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in mathematics. To address this, they have recently introduced a 'Challenge Club'. During the inspection, pupils were keen to talk about the maths investigations they had undertaken during their sessions. There is a clear expectation that when completing work they are expected to give reasons and explanations for their answers. For example, they have to choose the correct method, prove their answer and then explain how they know their

answer is correct. The children refer to this as 'APE', an acronym for 'answer, prove it and explain'.

- Reading has correctly been identified as a priority for development. Clear plans are in place to further improve the teaching of reading across the school. The main focus of this work is to improve pupils' comprehension and inference skills. During the inspection, guided reading sessions were observed. In upper key stage 2, pupils were expected to answer a comprehension question and then give reasons for their answers, similar to the expectations in mathematics. This work was extremely challenging but pupils were well supported by the use of appropriate learning prompts to succeed. However, in other classes, children were completing work which did not always link to the context of the book they were studying. For example, some groups spent time looking up the meaning of words in a dictionary and putting the words into a new sentence not linked to their book. Leaders' monitoring records show that this aspect of the school is improving but strategies to improve pupils' reading skills need to be further embedded.
- The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased recently. Leaders understand that they need to further develop ways to support these pupils and their acquisition of the English language. A specialist teacher is currently deployed throughout the school to support and advise teachers in meeting the needs of these pupils. There is more work to be done to ensure that this group of pupils access their learning fully and develop their understanding.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a continued focus on raising standards in reading by ensuring that the teaching of comprehension and inference skills is effective in enabling all pupils to make good or better progress
- more of the most able pupils are challenged in a timely manner to allow them to achieve at a higher level in mathematics and learn in greater depth
- given the increase in the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language, resources are available in every lesson to support their acquisition of English to help them better access their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Johnstone
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you to discuss and agree the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I scrutinised a range of documents, including your assessment analysis, school self-evaluation and your school development plan.

I conducted a learning walk throughout the school with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher.

I talked to pupils throughout the inspection about their learning and met with a small group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.

I looked at pupils' books and reviewed the quality of learning in English and mathematics across the school.

I met with the school's business manager to review the school's single central record.

I met with you and your pastoral support manager to review child protection logs and other documents relating to safeguarding arrangements in your school.

I held a meeting with two governors, including the chair. I also met with your school improvement partner.

I met with parents on the school yard and reviewed the 48 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey. I took account of the 15 responses to the staff questionnaire.