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Mr Andy King
Headteacher
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Dear Mr King

Short inspection of Wherwell Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Wherwell is a caring school where everyone treats each other with respect. The pupils are friendly and welcoming. Parents said that their children enjoy school and are well looked after. Parents highly recommend the school because they value the ethos and education that it provides.

Pupils feel well supported by staff and enjoy their work. They said that pupils take good care of one another. A good example of this is the buddy system that enables older pupils to support children in the Reception class. Older pupils understand that this helps them to develop their own sense of responsibility. Younger pupils enjoy having older friends in the school. This helps pupils to become positive role models for younger ones. Pupils said that learning is fun. They really enjoy the after-school clubs they have access to.

You are ably supported by your deputy headteacher. Together, you have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have successfully tackled the areas identified for improvement by the last inspection. During my visit, I saw that pupils are now making good progress in key stage 1. This is because teaching is stronger than it was. It is also the result of senior leaders now holding staff more closely to account for the progress that pupils make. As a result of this work, you have ensured that pupils make at least good progress across the school.

Consequently, pupils continue to achieve above-average results in national assessments.

You have rightly identified that pupils make more progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing. The deputy headteacher, as subject leader for English, has a clear vision of how this subject should be taught. You have made good use of support available from the local authority to deliver these changes. Staff are enjoying the training they are receiving and talked enthusiastically about the improvements they are already beginning to see in pupils' phonics skills and writing. The impact of this work was clear in some classrooms, when I visited the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Parents said that their children are safe, happy and well looked after. Pupils said that they feel safe and well cared for at school. They know that the staff take good care of them. Pupils were clear that, if they needed help, staff would always be there.

Leaders and governors take the safety of pupils extremely seriously. They have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make sure that staff understand what to do if they have a concern about a pupil, and whom they need to talk to. When necessary, leaders liaise well with other agencies. Governors are thorough in their monitoring of safeguarding, and vigilant when considering potential risks. They regularly consider all aspects of the school that affect the safety and well-being of pupils. A good example of their vigilance is the regular visits by governors to check health and safety. During these visits, risks are quickly identified and addressed. An example is the lighting that was installed to ensure that pupils are safe when leaving the school following after-school clubs.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look in particular at the following aspects of the school's work:
 - the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
 - how well leaders have addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection
 - how effectively leaders ensure that the teaching of writing enables all pupils to make good progress
 - how effectively the school promotes good attendance for all pupils.
- Leaders have rightly identified some inconsistencies in the way that phonics and writing are taught. This has resulted in uneven progress for pupils. The English leader is changing the whole school's approach to the teaching of writing. She has a clear vision for the development of teachers' practice, which will enable all pupils to make strong progress. Actions, such as the recent training for teaching assistants and the introduction of a system to track pupil's progress in phonics,

are improving the progress that pupils make. The impact of the previously inconsistent teaching of phonics and writing has resulted in some gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills in key stage 2. This now needs to be addressed so that all pupils are able to reach their potential.

- Governance is strong. Governors have a good understanding of the school and are highly ambitious for pupils. They thoroughly monitor most aspects of the school's performance. Governors are rightly increasing their ownership of the school improvement process. They are strengthening their monitoring of the impact of leaders' actions on outcomes for pupils. The school improvement plan is based on careful data analysis to accurately identify the areas of pupils' work that need to improve. Governors monitor the plan closely by reviewing the school's performance against the challenging targets that have been set. However, governors do not closely monitor the progress that groups of pupils make. Consequently, they do not hold senior leaders fully to account for the progress that pupils make across the school.
- Rates of attendance are higher than average and persistent absence is lower than national rates. Leaders effectively monitor the attendance of all pupils. They act effectively to tackle any poor attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment of writing is consistently high in all classes so that pupils make good progress across the school
- governors use the tracking information of pupils' learning, tracking their progress from starting points, to hold leaders fully to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you to discuss aspects of the school's work including pupils' progress and attendance. Together with the deputy headteacher, I visited all classrooms and saw pupils at their work. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and met with the school council to gather its views. I observed the behaviour of pupils at breaktime, and spoke to them about the school. I met with six members of the governing body and spoke to a representative from the local

authority. I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. I took account of 77 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 33 free-text comments. I also considered 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 73 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.