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Mr Andy Gamble
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gamble

Short inspection of Windmill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 2018 with Ofsted Inspector Gillian Nimer, 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.

The last inspection took place before your appointment to the executive headship of the federation. Since your appointment, there have been many changes to staffing, including senior and middle leadership roles and in governance. You have drawn on external support well and steered the school with commitment and determination through changing times.

You have successfully built a 'can and will do' culture across the school. Your leadership is inspirational and your relationships with all stakeholders are strong. Staff morale is high. You have invested time and resources to enable your staff to develop their skills and confidence. Staff have warmly welcomed this. Staff see the vital contribution they make to whole-school planning and to pupils' success. They have a good understanding of pupils' needs and of how to address them. The high expectations you have for all staff go hand in hand with the high-quality teaching evident.

You have also developed your leadership team and are committed to working collaboratively across the federation, as well as more widely with other schools and partnerships. Leaders' skills in moderating pupils' work, checking the effectiveness of teaching and reviewing data to check that pupils are making good progress are all improving. Staff and leaders are held effectively to account for the progress of pupils.

Governance is strong. Governors know the school and community it serves well. They visit regularly, offering effective support and challenge to you and other leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's performance, interrogating effectively the array of information that they gather, and that you share with them, about the school. Governors have overseen some major developments recently, including staffing changes. They ensure that the decisions they make are in pupils' best interests. Governors constantly strive to improve their own performance and develop their skills. To do this, they use other leaders within the federation, external agencies and local authority training to good effect.

Windmill Primary School is a very welcoming, friendly and nurturing school where staff help pupils to develop well, academically and personally. Pupils are happy to attend. Many say that they 'love their learning'. Pupils are cheerful and enthusiastic and show positive attitudes towards their school and each other. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. One parent commented, 'My child is thriving at this school.' Another parent stated: 'I am proud to send my children to Windmill Primary. The staff are truly amazing and my children are excelling here. My children are happy, settled and making excellent progress.'

You, your team and governors have acted resolutely and with determination to address areas of weakness. The last inspection report in October 2014, for example, identified the need to increase opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in problem-solving. Leaders have responded well to this. There is now a clear and structured approach to the teaching of mathematics, placing a strong emphasis on problem-solving and reasoning. Staff are alert in addressing any misconceptions that pupils have and are skilled at deepening pupils' mathematical skills and confidence. Pupils told inspectors how they enjoy the challenge of mathematics. A good level of challenge is evident in the examples of work seen. As a result, outcomes in mathematics by the end of Year 6 have been improving year on year.

Leaders also have a good track record of bringing about improvement in pupils' outcomes in other subjects. Pupils in key stage 2, for example, are making strong progress in reading. Progress in writing by the end of Year 6 are also improving but still lag behind those in mathematics and reading. Pupils' attainments by the end of Year 2 also remain below average. You are already taking action to address these aspects but know that more work is needed and that there are important next steps to address.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Policies and procedures linked to safeguarding are up to date. Regular training and information-sharing ensure that teachers and governors understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Recruitment records are detailed and complete, and policies followed fastidiously.

There is a tenacity in leaders in the work you do to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported. This is also the case for any pupils who are regularly absent. You and other leaders use a variety of strategies to support families when encouraging pupils back into school. Robust investigation, including work with external agencies, is undertaken if ever you are concerned about a pupil's well-being. Pupils who met inspectors formally and informally said that they feel safe and know how to report concerns. They talked enthusiastically about discussions they have had in school on how to keep safe when using social media and what to do if they were being bullied. Even so, pupils were adamant that bullying did not happen at Windmill Primary. Inspection evidence, along with the views of the parents and staff, confirms this.

The federation safeguarding leader provides strong leadership. She has increased the understanding of staff to support pupils further and brought in additional systems for reporting and tracking concerns. Referrals are followed up swiftly and with vigilance. She works closely with the most vulnerable pupils in the school and shows a strong understanding of the barriers to learning which they face. She engages a range of external agencies to make sure that pupils receive the support that is needed.

Inspection findings

- Most children enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are lower than those normally expected for their age. Early years leadership and staff have worked effectively to improve the quality of provision so that it stimulates and engages young children well in their learning. They ensure a language-rich environment where talk is encouraged as children explore a wide range of interesting activities. They also ensure that the effect of this provision is carefully checked and adapted to meet children's ever-changing needs. There are strong, caring relationships between children and adults. Parents are fully involved and supportive of the work staff do to support their children. Children move on quickly from their different starting points. In recent years, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has been increasing, although it is still below average.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check in the last few years have been below average. You have focused on improving this, particularly for boys, and your actions are having some impact. For example, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 2 has been on a rising trend. You, rightly, place high importance on developing pupils' reading and phonics skills. School information and inspection evidence show that more pupils are improving their phonics awareness and skills and using them to improve their reading. Pupils spoke enthusiastically with inspectors about favourite books and authors. Even so, further work is needed to ensure that the quality of phonics teaching is consistently strong so that a higher proportion of pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' attainments by the end of Year 2 are below average. Too few pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have put clear plans in place in order to increase the proportion of pupils who reach the

expected standards, and their actions are showing some positive results. However, leaders recognise that there is more work needed.

- In reading in key stage 2, you have been successful in ensuring that pupils develop their skills as readers of fiction and non-fiction texts. You have also encouraged a love of reading. School displays celebrate and encourage reading. The library, which is due to open soon, is set to further enhance opportunities for pupils to enjoy reading a wide range of books. Pupils spoke to me with enthusiasm about what they read. Staff effectively questioned pupils to elicit detailed responses about the ways writers use word choice to create mood and tone for the reader. Pupils' attainments in reading by the end of Year 6 have improved. This is now a strength of the school.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is also improving. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised. Pupils' presentation of their written work is generally good, as well as accurate. The approach to teaching handwriting is clear and consistent. Increasingly, pupils are provided with opportunities to write at length, including in a range of subjects beyond English. This is particularly the case as pupils move up through the year groups. Even so, Pupils' attainment in writing still lag behind those in reading and mathematics. Further work is needed to ensure that pupils are consistently challenged to use and apply their writing and communication skills in all of their work.
- The school places a high priority on the 'In Harmony' initiative, in partnership with Opera North. This has a significant and positive impact on many aspects of pupils' learning, ambition and well-being. It is clear that pupils really enjoy and value this. It underpins the school's vision of 'Excellence through Effort and Aspiration'. All pupils from Year 2 through to Year 6 learn to play a musical instrument, including the violin, viola and cello. The music and choral tuition, conducted by professional members of Opera North, is a significant school strength. Pupils are fully engrossed in both learning to sing and to play musical instruments.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They take turns and contribute fully in class, respecting the contributions other pupils make. Pupils take care with, and show a sense of pride in, the work they present in their books. Their work on displays around the school is attractive. They treat the attractive and engaging learning environment with respect. Pupils welcome and enjoy using the interactive learning displays around the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of children that reach a good level of development by the end of the early years increases
- the proportions of pupils that reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 increase
- the teaching of phonics is consistently strong so that a greater proportion of

pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Years 1 and 2

- across the school, pupils are consistently challenged to use and apply their writing and communication skills in all their work so that attainment in writing improve and are as good as in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicola Shipman
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors visited all classes during this short inspection. Almost all visits were with members of the school's senior leadership team. During the visits, inspectors observed learning and, where appropriate, spoke with pupils about their work and attitudes to school. Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' books and folders and children's learning journals to judge their progress and the quality of their presentation.

During the day, inspectors spoke with you and the federation headteacher, the federation deputy head, the special educational needs coordinator and the teachers who lead on English, key stage 1, early years and safeguarding. Discussions were also held with five governors, one of whom was the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also met with an officer from Leeds local authority who has been monitoring the work of the school. Inspectors observed and spoke informally with pupils during the day and at break and lunchtime. Inspectors observed one 'In Harmony' instrumental music session for Year 3 pupils and a Year 5 and 6 choral singing session, both run by teaching artists from the Opera North orchestra. This is part of the school's 'In Harmony' programme. Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils to discuss their attitudes to learning and their views of the school. Inspectors heard a group of pupils from Years 1, 2, 3 and 6 reading, and discussed reading with them.

Inspectors took into account 12 free-text responses from parents and the views of the 14 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also took into account 21 views from your own staff survey. Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents about the school's safeguarding systems, the quality and effect of staff training, governors' work and the minutes of their actions, and checks you make on the quality and effect of teaching.