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Mrs Lin Williams
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Short inspection of Winscombe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 October 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the deputy headteacher have worked successfully to strengthen and consolidate leadership over the last few years. You both lead in a calm, measured way and collaborate closely with other staff. This has enabled you to realise the leadership potential in other staff. They have risen to the challenge and developed their expertise because they feel trusted and well supported. Consequently, leadership at different levels is strong.

Leaders and the wider staff have the best interests of pupils at heart. Your high expectations of pupils and staff are enshrined in your belief that the school's core business is to promote 'learning without limits'. In order to achieve this, staff strive for high academic standards and provide a rich, creative curriculum. They also ensure that pupils receive the individual wrap-around care they need to be ready for learning. Yours is a caring school where pupils feel valued and respected. This is because staff acknowledge the importance of nurturing values such as tolerance and personal qualities such as resilience. As a result, pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters is well nourished as they move up through the school. Moreover, pupils mirror, in their behaviour, the care they receive; they are polite, courteous and cheerful because they feel happy and comfortable in the school.

Leaders are well supported by governors, who are rightly proud of this high-performing school and are dedicated in their work. The school benefits from having

governors who come from different backgrounds, such as accountancy, education and the police. Consequently, they bring different skills and experience 'to the table', which enables them to hold leaders to account for various aspects of the school's work.

Leadership and the work of the school have been enhanced further by the strong federation that exists with a partner school. This partnership has enabled Winscombe Primary School to benefit from shared teaching expertise, sharper strategic oversight and greater financial resources. Such benefits have helped to consolidate high levels of pupil achievement over time. Furthermore, leaders value the importance of 'looking outwards' and working with different partners to improve what they do. This includes providing support to other schools, from which Winscombe also benefits.

The school also continues to work well with parents. Staff communicate with parents often to promote openness and accessibility. They ensure that parents are kept well informed about their child's progress, as well as about key events and the school's work to develop learning and core values. For example, the school website is an effective tool with which parents gain a good understanding of the school's work.

Strong leadership aimed at driving up standards is ensuring that teaching meets the demands of the new curriculum and the needs of pupils. High expectations of behaviour also mean that pupils apply themselves to their learning in a conscientious, determined way. As a result, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for secondary school by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included establishing the effectiveness of actions taken to increase pupils' progress at key stage 2 and phonics outcomes in Year 1. We also considered whether attendance was improving for different groups of pupils. Finally, we considered whether safeguarding is effective. These lines of enquiry are considered below under 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

Safeguarding is effective.

Staff are clear about the procedures to follow and whom to talk to should they have concerns about a child. This is because they have received the appropriate training and because designated safeguarding personnel check that it is understood and acted on. All staff know to be vigilant for signs of neglect or distress. Referrals are kept securely and record the necessary information. They are followed up promptly and records indicate the action taken to resolve cases.

Staff work closely with all members of the school community and outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. As the deputy headteacher told me, 'We have worked hard to build trust between parents and ourselves.'

The overwhelming majority of pupils feel safe at school. This is because they are happy to talk to different staff should they have any concerns or worries. One pupil told me that staff 'put rules in place to keep you safe'. All the pupils who spoke with me reported that behaviour in the school is good. They said that bullying is very rare and that if ever pupils do have 'fall-outs' they are dealt with effectively and quickly. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety. When asked how they would advise younger pupils to stay safe online, pupils provided a number of practical suggestions.

Checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are up to date and fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make good progress because teachers understand their needs well. They design tasks that are pitched at the right level to enable pupils of different abilities to make good strides in their learning. Furthermore, pupils are encouraged to decide the level of challenge for themselves so that they take greater responsibility for their own learning. Nevertheless, pupils could be pushed to make even greater progress to match their high levels of attainment by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils across the school demonstrate very good attitudes to learning. They are attentive to what their teachers say and focus studiously on the task in hand, either when working independently or as part of a group. Their attitudes to learning are positive because teachers establish consistently good habits and routines from an early age.
- Different resources are used well to promote pupils' learning. The school environment, for example, is designed to make learning seem like an exciting, adventurous pursuit. Every space is beautifully presented, awash with colour and adorned by pupils' work. Displays assist pupils with their learning, promote their finest writing and explore the school's values. Teaching assistants provide good support to lower-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They do this by asking questions that encourage pupils to think more deeply in order to arrive at the answer themselves.
- The feedback provided by teachers helps pupils move forward in their learning. This is, in part, because they are well supported by praise for their strengths. It is also because teachers highlight in an open, clear and constructive way where pupils have made mistakes. Teachers encourage pupils to reflect on their mistakes and improve their work. This approach is particularly beneficial for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who appreciate chances to reflect on the qualities of their work.
- The work in pupils' books is presented to a very high standard and is of high quality. Pupils are provided with numerous opportunities to develop their writing skills across different subjects. As a result, they become technically skilled writers adept at writing for different purposes and audiences. Pupils' mathematical skills are no less well developed. They are taught to apply their calculation, reasoning and problem-solving skills in equal measure. The handwriting of pupils of

different abilities is immaculate and highly disciplined. This is because pupils have been taught to write in a cursive fashion from an early age. All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, take pride in their work and are committed to doing their best.

- Phonics outcomes at the end of Year 1 in 2017 were well above average. This is an improvement on the previous year when outcomes were below average. Leaders were quick to analyse the reasons for this underperformance, which contrasted with previous years' high performance. They took the appropriate action to ensure that pupils taking the phonics check in 2017 were well prepared.
- The attendance of pupils overall is broadly in line with average. This is an improvement on the 2015/16 academic year, when it was below average. The attendance of different groups of pupils is improving, such as that of pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, there are a very small number of pupils who are persistently absent. Staff use positive incentives, the education welfare officer and close working with parents to improve attendance. In cases where absence is because of medical need, staff are particularly assiduous in their communication with parents to support pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- action continues to be taken to ensure that pupils at key stage 2 make progress that matches their high levels of attainment across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke to you and the deputy headteacher. I also spoke to representatives of the governing body, pupils and an external adviser from North Somerset County Council.

Senior leaders and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. We also scrutinised the work in pupils' books.

A range of documentary evidence was considered, which included the school's self-evaluation and full governing body minutes. I also considered progress and attendance information. Additionally, I scrutinised various safeguarding records, including those relating to the suitability of staff to work with children.

I took account of 55 responses to the Parent View online survey, 69 responses to the pupil survey and six responses to the staff survey.