

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



9 January 2017

Mrs Joanne Poyser
Headteacher
Wirksworth CofE Infant School
Greenway Croft
North End
Wirksworth
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 4FG

Dear Mrs Poyser

Short inspection of Wirksworth CofE Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 8 December 2016, 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are an inspirational and dynamic leader across the infant school federation, providing pupils with a rich and stimulating curriculum. You receive excellent support from the governing body, which provides appropriate challenge to ensure that the school goes from strength to strength.

The pupils reflect the core values of the school through their caring and thoughtful relationships with each other. These values are endorsed in daily collective worship activities and during class activities. The pupils understand the importance of key values, such as humility, compassion and forgiveness. These are exemplified in pupils' behaviour around the school and their willingness to engage in the varied learning experiences on offer at the school.

You and your staff have focused on delivering a curriculum that is broad and balanced. The curriculum is innovative and interesting because you link it to the school's local community. You regularly invite people in to school to talk about their roles and responsibilities in the community. Pupils' writing in their workbooks showed that they enjoyed the visit from the local fire service. Such visits are used well to enhance the curriculum.

You are passionate about providing activities for the pupils that meet all of their

interests, both during and after school. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the school's morning and after-school club, called the AM and PM clubs, where they enjoy playing games and have the opportunity to use their skills in creative ways.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. For example, I observed the local church leader deliver an assembly based on the advent wreath, and describe in detail the significance of the candles as representations of the key people in the Christmas story. The pupils listened attentively throughout the assembly and shared in the delight of lighting the candles. The values of the school are endorsed during collective worship and this is reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes and behaviours towards each other.

You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement from the previous Ofsted inspection. There is greater consistency in marking and feedback. Pupils' books show that they have regular opportunities to improve their work and are given time to check their work and modify any errors. There is evidence to show that the most able pupils are given more challenging work through targeted questioning, which supports pupils to deepen their learning. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss their ideas with their classmates and record their findings in innovative ways. For example, pupils enjoyed writing about their favourite polar animal, making paper model penguins and using dough to make seals.

Performance management addresses the school's priorities well and is linked to target-setting, pupils' progress and attainment. You carefully review teachers' performance linked to their targets to ensure that there is improved pupil achievement through effective performance management. You present your recommendations to the governing body with supporting evidence.

The varied curriculum supports pupils to use and apply knowledge well, including their mathematical knowledge. Teachers have set tasks before and after a topic to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers use their assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding to adapt tasks; this contributes to increased rates of pupils' progress.

Teachers are able to assess pupils accurately and record this on the school's comprehensive tracking system. Teachers regularly check on pupils' learning during class activities, which supports teachers to make informed judgements about how well pupils are achieving. Leaders have detailed discussions with teachers every term about how well pupils are achieving across the curriculum. As a result of the school's meticulous assessment, leaders are able to hold teachers to account and ensure that any underachievement is dealt with swiftly.

Pupils' attendance, although improving, has been below the national average for the past few years. You have already implemented new ways to raise the profile of attendance in the school, and leaders are monitoring this carefully to ensure that attendance continues to improve for this academic year. The school information for the previous academic year shows that attendance has improved and is in line with the national average. You are keen to sustain this and ensure that every pupil attends school regularly.

You and the governing body acknowledge that there was a drop in achievement in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2016. You are monitoring this to ensure that the school meets at least the national expectations for this year's Year 1 cohort and you use adults well to support the needs of pupils who require more practice with their sounds.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have excellent partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies. This has helped to ensure that pupils are supported and kept safe. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date and governors make thorough checks on all safeguarding practices. Staff know precisely what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern and have all of the information and guidance they need to provide excellent support for pupils in their care.

High-quality, detailed records show that you manage concerns swiftly and understand the procedures for referring pupils where there is a concern. You are prompt and vigilant in garnering further support by approaching the appropriate external agency

Pupils feel safe at the school and are confident that their concerns are quickly dealt with by staff. They know precisely how the school keeps them safe, through locking the school gates and requiring visitors to sign in on arrival at the school. Pupils said bullying is rare and they feel assured teachers will deal with any disagreements promptly.

You and your staff promote the welfare and safety of pupils well in the school, through links with the Derbyshire Healthy Schools Community Award programme. You receive valuable guidance from the programme that supports you to target key welfare and safety messages. You organise 'staying safe days' that teach pupils about keeping cyber-safe, and water, sun and road safety. You ensure that parents are kept informed through regular newsletters.

Inspection findings

- You have a thorough and detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This information is shared with all staff across the federated infant schools. The process of information-sharing shows that you have a cohesive and consistent approach in your leadership and management across the two federated infant schools. You have put actions in to place to deal with the school's priorities and harnessed the support of all key stakeholders in the pursuit of excellence.
- The governing body is highly skilled and offers support and challenge to the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's needs and priorities. They have set these out in a governors' action plan, along with their monitoring responsibilities of the school. They are developing strong links with the local junior school and liaise effectively with the cluster of local primary schools.
- Children in the early years enjoy their learning because the early years leader

ensures that the provision, facilitated well by adults, is fun and exciting. For example, children were keen to show me their number line and how they had matched the numbers to the correct hole. Another child showed me her imaginative model and explained what the characters were doing in great detail and with confidence.

- You and the early years leader acknowledge that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the early years, in 2016, was slightly below the national average. You are carefully monitoring children's progress in the early years so that any underachievement can be dealt with promptly this year, to avoid any repeat of this atypical outcome.
- The early years leaders know the children well and how to support them through carefully organised activities. For example, she supports children's development of their fine motor skills through fun activities, and builds on children's core muscle strength through dynamic physical exercises.
- In 2016, pupils' outcomes in the phonics screening check in Year 1 were below the national average. You and your team are eager to improve outcomes for all pupils, particularly the most able pupils, through providing appropriate activities that sufficiently challenge them. You also use teaching assistants well to support vulnerable pupils who struggle with their phonics through focused support.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 show that pupils' achievement in reading and writing is a strength of the school where pupils achieve above the national expectation for the expected standard and greater depth. Pupils also achieve well in mathematics and are in line with national expectations.
- Reading skills are taught well in the school. Pupils enjoy reading and are given the opportunity to select a broad range of texts. They read their books well and apply their phonics skills correctly. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive extra support with their reading. They practise their phonics sounds with teaching assistants and this is supporting them to make good progress in reading. The most able pupils read well and enjoy reading challenging books. They say what they like to read and have strong reading preferences.
- The school's broad and balanced curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The Year 2 pupils I spoke with told me about the recent Christmas tree switch-on event. The pupils enjoyed the opportunities to decorate the tree with popcorn and celebrate the switch-on together. Pupils were also thrilled to tell me that they were looking forward to creating their own Christmas decorations at the art club after school. They commented favourably on the range of clubs after school and their enjoyment of learning to play an instrument.
- The pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values through their contributions to the school council and the eco council. They understand how their actions can contribute to making the world a better place through acting responsibly. Pupils know the importance of working together and that they have been elected to the councils to perform an important role.
- Staff provide effective support to pupils with special educational and/or disabilities. They know how to support the child's individual needs and accommodate them through adjusting teaching and learning effectively. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from

their starting points because of the effective support they are given.

- Pupils' books, including those of disadvantaged pupils, demonstrate good progress, often from low starting points. Boys make good progress from their starting points and enjoy a curriculum that meets their interests. They are given plenty of opportunities to write and record their work.
- You and the leadership team have used the additional sports funding well. Pupils enjoy the lunchtime games that are led by an adult and their regular swimming lessons. You and the staff emphasise healthy eating as well as the importance of physical exercise. You and other leaders encourage families to participate in physical exercise through outdoor activity booklets and opportunities to link exercise with curriculum themes called 'Healthy Living Days'.
- Parents who spoke to me commented favourably about the school and how settled their children are. One parent told me that she will be sad to see her child leave at the end of Year 2. Responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire highlighted that the vast majority of parents are satisfied with the education that their child receives at the school.
- The school website meets statutory requirements for published information.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening test continues to improve in line with national expectations, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- pupils' attendance further improves and persistent absenteeism is eradicated.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Nuttall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents at the start of the day and met with you and four representatives from the governing body. I listened to pupils read and spoke with a group of Year 2 pupils about their school experience. You and I visited all classes and examined pupils' workbooks. In addition, I scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including the single central register (the school's record of safeguarding recruitment checks on staff). I evaluated the school's documentation in relation to pupils' performance, improvement planning, attendance, and minutes of the governing body meetings. I took account of 15

responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the 27 responses to the Ofsted free-text service. There were no responses to the staff or pupils survey.

This short inspection focused on:

- whether leaders had addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection
- how leaders have addressed persistent absence
- how leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to embed their core skills and make good progress across the curriculum
- how leaders have addressed the difference in attainment between boys and girls, particularly in writing
- whether safeguarding was still effective across the school and pupils were safe.