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Mrs Sharon Slack
Executive headteacher
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Dear Mrs Slack

Short inspection of Winster CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 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. You have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. These are known and understood by all. You have used your detailed knowledge of pupils to create a sharply focused school improvement plan, designed to maximise pupils' progress. Leaders, governors and staff share your high aspirations for all pupils. You work together to continually improve the quality of education for pupils at the school.

You have maintained the significant strengths noted at the previous inspection, in particular in terms of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are friendly, behave well and look after each other. The pupils who I spoke with said that they felt proud to be at the school. Parents and pupils appreciate the warm and welcoming atmosphere which you have created.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils understand clearly what they are trying to learn and achieve and are keen to apply the skills which teachers give them to improve their work.

As a proven and experienced headteacher, your expertise has been sought to support another local school, where you currently spend half of your week. You

have ensured that this has not detracted from the high standards which you have maintained at Winster Primary. In fact, you have been determined to maximise this opportunity and use it to share best practice across both schools. You work hand in hand with a senior leader at Winster Primary, who deputises for you in your absence. You both carefully track and monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics, including that of disadvantaged pupils, the most able and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You identify any pupils who are not on track to make good progress from their starting points. You then put in place bespoke support for these pupils, which you showed me examples of during the inspection. You make sure that this support is regularly reviewed so that any interventions that are not enabling pupils to catch up are quickly changed. You now, quite rightly, have plans to extend this successful tracking and monitoring of pupils achievements to other curriculum subjects across the school.

Since the last inspection, the majority of pupils have continued to achieve in line with national expectations. Last year new national measures for judging pupils' achievement, which are not comparable with those of previous years, were introduced. You have worked with other schools and the local authority and analysed the first year of national data, to gain a better understanding of the new measures and provide additional training for all staff. Staff are now clear about what pupils have to do to reach both the expected and the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have revised the mathematics curriculum to provide more well-planned and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Evidence in pupils' mathematics books, across all year groups, demonstrates that they are now given more opportunities to discuss and practise these key mathematical skills.

You have rightly identified that you want to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and vocabulary, to help pupils make even better progress across the school in reading and writing. To achieve this, you have invested in new books to engage pupils' interests and planned more opportunities for pupils to practise these skills regularly in lessons. It is too early to judge the impact of this as yet.

Until recently, pupils' attendance has been consistently above the national average. You do all you can to ensure that pupils are in school and that any pupil's absence is swiftly followed up. In your small school, the very small number of pupils recently persistently absent due to genuine illness or taking unauthorised holidays can cause school figures to fall below the national expectation.

Safeguarding is effective.

You are the designated safeguarding leader and you are supported by another senior leader. You are both appropriately trained and keep your knowledge current through regular online updates. Leaders and the governing body complete annual audits to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust. All statutory checks on staff are carried out and recorded carefully.

You rightly make the safety of pupils your highest priority. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality.

You have checked that all staff, including midday supervisors, have read and understood the latest government guidance. All staff know what to do if they have a concern. You showed me some examples where you had dealt with concerns promptly and followed up referrals with external agencies. Staff have had training so they can recognise how to protect pupils from the threat of radicalisation and extremism. You have also ensured that appropriate staff are trained in paediatric first aid.

Pupils say they feel safe at the school. You have provided opportunities for them to learn about road safety and how to stay safe online. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and were adamant that, if it did happen, it would be dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers. Your school's internal bullying logs corroborate this.

Inspection findings

- You, senior leaders and governors have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You have already identified that pupils need to develop their speaking and listening and vocabulary skills. You recognise that you need to extend your close tracking and monitoring of pupils to wider subjects across the curriculum.
- The governing body provide you with effective support and challenge. They ensure that government funding is used to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- As well as the school's strong links with the local community and the Church of England, you have ensured that pupils learn about different faiths and beliefs as part of the school's religious education curriculum. You also provide opportunities for pupils to visit different places of religious worship. Pupils understand that this helps them to appreciate the views of others. They said that the best thing about the school is that no one gets left out.
- Since the last inspection, you have developed leadership capacity across the school. Your mathematics and early years leaders now have responsibility for writing action plans for the areas which they oversee, to support whole-school improvement.
- You have revised the curriculum so that pupils have a clear progression route to build on their learning and understanding throughout their time at the school. Pupils enjoy imaginative topics, which develop their key literacy and numeracy skills, as well as their knowledge of science, humanities and the arts. Pupils who I spoke with during the inspection told me how much they enjoy the opportunity to learn outside as part of the school's work as a 'Forest school'.
- You work with local schools and the local authority to ensure that your assessments are accurate. Teachers use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that is appropriate for pupils from their starting points and

challenges the most able students.

- You have a consistent approach to teaching phonics. I heard pupils reading using the techniques the school has taught them to sound out difficult or unfamiliar words. You have successfully created a love of reading in pupils. Pupils read widely and often.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities at the school to comment on their progress without identifying them. However, school assessment information and pupils' books show that throughout the school pupils make good progress overall.
- In this school, with such small numbers in each year group, government floor standards do not apply.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils continue to develop their speaking and listening skills and vocabulary, so that more pupils reach a higher standard in reading and writing.

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

Sally Smith
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, five representatives from the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority. I listened to pupils reading and spoke with a group of key stage 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 18 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, the 17 responses to the Ofsted free text service, five responses to the staff survey and 25 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey.