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Mr Tim O'Brien
Headteacher
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Dear Mr O'Brien

Short inspection of Wootey Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in January 2014, you have worked well with the school community to create a clear vision based upon the values of nurture, challenge and innovate. These values are evident throughout the school. You know the strengths of your school well and are proud of these. You make skilful use of observations of lessons and pupils' work to identify those aspects of the school that can improve further. Your governors say that they can guarantee any question they raise about the school's performance will already have an improvement action in place. Based upon my inspection findings, I agree with their view.

The school's work to nurture pupils is impressive, led passionately by your deputy headteacher. Staff know each pupil personally. This supports pupils to develop positive learning behaviours, which I saw in lessons and at breaktime. Parents recognise the school's high standards of individual care and concern for their children's well-being. Parents strongly support the school's work and appreciate that staff are so approachable. One parent said: 'The care and commitment demonstrated by the teaching and support staff are second to none.'

You, your leaders and governors are ambitious for the school to become outstanding and know that pupils' progress needs to be more rapid. In 2016, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with those in other schools nationally. This means that most pupils made expected progress from their starting points. We agreed that more pupils need to make

stronger progress as they move through the school to reach even higher standards by the time they leave. This is particularly so for disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils were less likely than other pupils nationally to make expected or better progress.

At the school's last inspection in December 2012, inspectors recognised the school's many strengths in teaching and learning. They also identified that lower-ability pupils needed to make more progress in Years 3 and 4, where teaching and learning were less effective, particularly in reading and writing. Since that inspection many staff changes have taken place, causing dips in pupils' rates of progress. You have successfully rebuilt a skilled staff team with effective leaders who support you well to ensure good teaching and learning. Your assessment information tells you that pupils now in Years 5 and 6 are catching up on learning. There are signs this year that pupils are now making stronger progress in Year 3.

You work effectively with your leaders to identify the best teaching to meet the needs of your pupils. Your staff appreciate the training which you provide to improve their teaching skills. Senior leaders carefully check the school's work to review its impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Your teachers work closely with neighbouring schools to ensure that assessment of pupils' achievement is accurate. You maintain very detailed tracking of each pupil's progress. Helpfully, you regularly discuss this with your teachers to agree any additional teaching or personal support that individual pupils might need.

Teachers plan lessons effectively. They tailor the way in which they vary learning tasks, giving helpful feedback to pupils according to their needs. Pupils appreciate this approach because it gives them confidence to take the next steps in learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed solving challenging mathematical problems requiring two or more steps. They clearly understood that 'having a go' and making errors supports them to learn well.

Pupils talked enthusiastically to me about their topics and the interesting ways in which these are brought to life through visits, drama and art. They are particularly proud of the school's wide range of sporting opportunities. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they have a wealth of memorable moments from their time at Wootey Junior School. They have enjoyed raising funds for charity events and told me with meaning what they had learned about sacrifice from their recent studies of ancient civilisation.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Staff and governors understand their responsibilities because of the appropriate and up-to-date training they receive. Pupils and parents confirm that the school is a safe place to be. Pupils say that any reported incident is quickly dealt with by staff who listen carefully. This helps avoid any bullying.

Pupils' attendance is better than the national average. The school has successfully improved the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, including those who are transient or in other vulnerable circumstances. Your deputy headteacher works diligently with families to find innovative solutions to persistent absence.

Your curriculum supports pupils appropriately to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when cycling or when online, for example. Pupils understand about prejudice-based bullying. The school's promotion of British values has helped pupils to understand the significance of treating others with tolerance and showing respect for difference. Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground and they demonstrate care towards each other. They welcome having a school 'worry-pig' into which they can post any concerns. Each concern generates a helpful response from staff.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on: how well teaching and learning in mathematics supports and challenges pupils from their different starting points; the progress that pupils currently make in reading; and how the school ensures that disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- We saw in mathematics lessons and in workbooks that pupils are developing the skills to tackle complex problems. Almost all pupils I spoke to during the inspection told me how much they enjoy mathematics because they like work that challenges them. They can explain their ideas using correct mathematical vocabulary. Strong subject leadership is having an impact on teaching and learning by ensuring that tasks are matched appropriately to pupils' different abilities. We saw lower-ability pupils working confidently towards the standards expected for their age while learning about shape. At the same time, higher-ability pupils were tackling content in greater depth, interpreting a set of mathematical instructions to describe irregular shapes. The additional teaching that you have put in place in Year 6 is supporting more rapid progress, enabling this year group to plug any gaps in their learning. This is offering middle-ability pupils the opportunity to reach a higher standard. Year 3 and 6 workbooks which I saw show that pupils of different abilities are making good progress. You and your subject leader rigorously monitor the impact of improvement actions so that good practice becomes embedded throughout the school.
- Last summer, you identified some areas of reading comprehension that required greater focus within lessons. Your subject leader provided clear guidance and teachers have responded well. We saw in lessons how much pupils enjoy the challenging reading texts that teachers choose. Pupils talked readily about the plot lines and characters in books. They are now becoming increasingly skilled to understand the meaning of vocabulary within their reading. Strong links between reading and writing support pupils to learn, understand and practise skills. As a result of improvements to the teaching and learning of reading, your English leader is now making further improvements to writing. This can be seen particularly in the writing middle- and higher-attaining pupils.
- To support pupils' best progress as soon as they join Year 3, your English leader

is wisely working with the infant school to ensure effective communication about pupils' earlier achievement.

- Your school improvement plan recognises that improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils is a priority. In 2016 when the tests became more challenging, this group did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally and none reached the higher standard in any subject. Our classroom visits confirmed that current disadvantaged pupils are making rapid progress as a result of additional and well-targeted support. Disadvantaged pupils understand what they must do to improve their work because teachers give them clear guidance. Effective teaching assistants support and motivate pupils to work hard by practising important skills. We saw in a Year 6 mathematics class that around a quarter of this year group's disadvantaged pupils are confidently working at the standard expected for their age. Teachers aim ambitiously for these pupils to meet the higher standard in the summer tests.
- The local authority has supported your school well to extend the influence of middle leaders, whose increased effectiveness has extended the school's capacity for improvement. They are suitably focused on ensuring that all pupils make strong progress from their starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics continues to improve, boosting pupils' achievement further in these subjects throughout the school
- disadvantaged pupils are suitably challenged to move on rapidly from their starting points so that a higher proportion make better than expected progress.

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

Linda Jacobs
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you accompanied me on visits to every class and year group. I observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning in classrooms and around the school. I held meetings with you, your leaders and with the chair of the governing body, accompanied by three other governors. I spoke to groups of pupils during breaktime and on a walk through the school. I heard pupils from

different year groups read. I talked to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I met parents at the end of the school day and took into account 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the accompanying free-text responses. I also considered the responses of 10 pupils and 12 staff to the relevant Ofsted questionnaires. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: information about pupils' progress; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and development planning; policies; minutes of governing body meetings; the school's single central record of checks made on staff; and behaviour records.