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Mrs Anne Devereux
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Devereux

Short inspection of Waulud Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 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. Since your appointment in September 2016, you have wasted no time in bringing about important changes to the quality of teaching and leadership which have secured the improvement of the school. Your understanding of the school's strengths and remaining areas for development is accurate and you have developed a capable senior team to lead this work. All leaders and governors act effectively and staff support the direction in which you are taking the school. The school's strong values of 'Pride, Respect, Inclusion, Determination and Encouragement' have the support of all staff and provide children with a very nurturing, caring environment. As a result, pupils across the year groups are taught well, develop successful attitudes to learning and make good progress. They are also respectful of their teachers and one another.

Parents are very supportive of the changes you have brought about. They approve of the school's work to keep their children safe, teach them well and help them to become confident learners. They also reported that staff are very approachable should they have concerns. In addition, parents were fulsome in their praise for the improvements that you have made to teaching, and the help given to support children to complete their homework. Parents also reported their very high approval for the specialist support offered to their children should they have a problem, or when they need extra help in order to overcome difficulties with learning.

You and your staff have ensured that the school is very inclusive. Around half of the

pupils join the school without English as their first language. In addition, the numbers of pupils who join the school at times other than the start of the year or who have missed part of their schooling are above average. The proportions of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are disadvantaged are also higher than the national average. You and your team meet these challenges by working hard to remove the barriers they present. As a result, pupils of all backgrounds quickly settle in and are supported to make good progress.

Since the previous inspection and especially following your appointment, leaders have worked hard to make improvements. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills have been key priorities and clear improvements have taken place. Teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan work and activities for pupils of different abilities. Teaching is also organised to help pupils make a good start to their learning when they move up to a new class. All teaching staff benefit from effective professional development which helps them appreciate the demands of the new curriculum.

Your new governor team holds accurate views of how well the school is performing and clearly understands how to challenge and support leaders in order to address the remaining areas for development. The local authority has provided appropriate support and you have also worked in an effective partnership with a high-performing primary school. As a result, leadership at your school is secure.

Despite these improvements, you agree that teaching should become more challenging to help more pupils achieve the highest standards in English and mathematics, particularly those with average starting points. You also agree that some disadvantaged pupils and others who have special educational needs and/or disabilities need more precise help in lessons, so that they can tackle new and difficult work.

Safeguarding is effective.

All current leaders and governors undertake their statutory duties with care. Staff are suitably trained, referring to the latest government guidance. Staff are fully aware of how to act should they have concerns about any child. Similarly, pupils have full confidence in adults' ability to help them should they need to report a concern. High-quality care is offered to vulnerable pupils. Leaders communicate effectively with appropriate agencies, while the recording and sharing of information about children is highly effective. As a result, all leaders are fully aware of the experiences of different children and can act quickly to help them if their circumstances change.

All current checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children are effective. Equally, access to the school site is well managed and arrangements for visitors to enter the school building are secure.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remains good, three of my key lines of enquiry were about pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results in 2015 and 2016 suggested that some groups of pupils had not gone on to reach the expected and higher standards they were capable of by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They included both boys and girls with lower and average starting points and included disadvantaged children, some of whom had special educational needs and/or disabilities. Your accurate evaluation of pupils' achievement had already identified this.
- The school's provisional 2017 assessment results show that in Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age rose above national figures in reading and writing and matched mathematics. In Year 2, assessment results rose above national figures in writing, while assessment results also improved in reading and mathematics. Equally, the proportions of pupils reaching higher standards or greater depth have increased. These results demonstrate that, in relation to their different starting points, the progress of pupils in both key stages 1 and 2 has firmly improved.
- Across the year groups, a wide range of good teaching is securing the effective development of pupils' mathematical, writing and reading skills. Pupils' mathematics work showed clear improvements being made during this term and across the last academic year. When reading, younger pupils and those in key stage 2 have been helped to catch up and have effective comprehension skills and the ability to evaluate characters in a story. Pupils' written work shows that their progress continues to improve. This was particularly so when considering the development of pupils' vocabulary, handwriting, spelling, grammar and composition skills.
- Despite the improvements found, we agreed that the progress of some pupils in key stage 2 with lower and average starting points has been slower because work has not sufficiently challenged them to apply their knowledge in writing and mathematics.
- Another line of enquiry was concerned with the effectiveness of the school's work to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Year 2 and Year 6 assessments for 2015 and 2016 showed that some of these pupils were not achieving as well as others nationally. Provisional results for 2017, pupils' work and assessment records demonstrate how you have brought about effective improvements in your work to help them. They are assessed accurately and teaching is more effective. As a result, their achievement is improving quickly.
- However, we agreed that, in some instances, the progress of these pupils is slower because the teaching of new, difficult vocabulary is not precise enough to help them understand it and, on other occasions, work is not demanding enough in mathematics. In addition, some of the work they complete in English is repetitive, which makes it difficult for them to move on to new learning when they are ready.
- At the previous inspection, governors were asked to pay closer attention to the

progress of different groups of pupils, including those deemed to be disadvantaged, and hold leaders more closely to account. I examined governors' work in this area. Governors have brought about effective improvements in the way the school addresses the difficulties experienced by different pupils. However, we also agreed that leaders need to pay closer attention to the work set for some pupils with lower and average starting points, in order to make sure that it is sufficiently challenging for them.

- My final line of enquiry was concerned with attendance. Attendance records for 2016 showed that rates of persistent absence for particular groups of pupils were higher than was the case nationally, and these included disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Scrutiny of current and recent attendance records and discussions with leaders and governors revealed a significant improvement in attendance since 2016. All leaders and staff have been effective in their work to reduce absence for all groups of pupils. Persistent absence has also been reduced for all groups and is now similar to national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils with lower and average starting points are provided with work which challenges them to make thorough use of their knowledge in English and mathematics
- teachers pay closer attention to any pupils whose progress has been slower and act quickly to help them secure their understanding of new vocabulary or skills
- checks made on the quality of teaching focus sharply on the work provided to those pupils with the lowest progress in the school, to make sure that activities are sufficiently demanding and pupils are helped to move on to new learning as soon as they are ready.

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

Yours sincerely

David Turner
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During this short inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and the chair of the governing body.
- I also met with members of staff to discuss their knowledge of safeguarding and arrangements for their training in this area.
- Together with the senior leaders responsible, I looked at current arrangements for supporting disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Accompanied by you, I visited lessons, looked at work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils throughout the day. I also held a meeting with pupils from key stage 2 and the school council.
- I met with an adviser from the local authority, to discuss their evaluation of the school's performance.
- I reviewed school documentation, assessment information, safeguarding arrangements, the single central record and information posted on the website.
- I took account of the three free-text comments submitted by parents on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the school's own records of parents' views. I also met with nine parents to discuss their views about the school. In addition, I took account of the 21 responses to the online staff questionnaire.