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Mrs Glenda Davies
Headteacher
Grappenhall St Wilfrid's CofE Primary School
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Dear Mrs Davies

Short inspection of Grappenhall St Wilfrid's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2018, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Under your self-assured and strong leadership the school has continued to go from strength to strength. Everyone in the school lives up to the school motto, 'achieving together through fun, faith and friendship'. You have created an environment that fosters the care and nurture of the whole school community, driven successfully by the school's Christian values. You, your staff, parents and carers, and children are rightly proud of the 'family feel' that is such a strong feature at St Wilfrid's. This is an impressive accomplishment considering that yours is a large school. You are ably assisted by your enthusiastic deputy and senior leadership team. Together, you ensure that high expectations enable pupils to flourish, both academically and in their personal development.

The very large majority of parents who spoke with me, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are extremely positive about the school and would recommend it to others without hesitation. Many parents said their children 'love school' and that staff are 'approachable and caring'. They also said they were 'thrilled' with the progress that their children make. A number felt that

communication between the school and them is a strength.

Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning. They consider that they have a responsibility to be good learners and to be good role models for each other. The care and consideration the older pupils display for younger ones are touching. Year 6 pupils talked with pride and affection about their 'buddies' in Reception.

All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of St Wilfrid's and feel that the school is well led and managed. Staff share your vision and aspirations and there is a strong sense of the staff team working to achieve the very best for pupils.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to sustain the improved rate of progress in mathematics by enabling pupils to apply their basic skills to solve mathematical problems. You were also asked to improve the consistency of teaching; provide pupils with opportunities to carry out enquiries in mathematics and science; and extend the use of computer technology to support pupils' learning.

Teachers across the school are consistent in their high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They have an excellent level of subject knowledge and give clear explanations. They expertly support learning by asking just the right questions to support pupils' understanding and draw out their learning. Pupils are confident in using computer technology to support their learning as a medium for writing or being creative, for research or to share their learning with others.

Over the last few years, pupils' progress in mathematics has improved. Pupils are given regular opportunities to practise and improve their basic skills in mathematics. They relish the chance to win awards for their hard work.

At the end of key stages 1 and 2, the very large majority of pupils reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth and higher standards is also above national averages. However, you are not complacent and are determined that the exceptional achievement in writing is also repeated in reading and mathematics. To this end, the actions you have already put in place are leading to further improvements, particularly in increasing the number of middle-ability pupils that achieve higher standards. These improvements are clearly evident in the work in pupils' books. Current assessment information suggests that a number of pupils are likely to reach these higher levels by the end of this academic year. However, I agree with you that there is still more work that can be done to ensure sustainability, particularly in reading.

You are currently exploring ways in which you can challenge pupils to think in greater depth about subjects other than English and mathematics. This focus is already evident in pupils' science, topic and religious education books, where they are asked challenging questions about their learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 were asked, after studying two periods of history, which era they would have preferred to live in and why. I was impressed with the enthusiasm of staff in

discussing their thinking in this area and struck by their eagerness to continue to develop pupils' depth of knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects. You recognise that you are only part way through exploring the best way to fully develop these subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have ensured that pupils have a safe and secure environment by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding records are kept rigorously, are detailed and are reviewed regularly to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken frequently and is up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Your vigilance regarding the care and support of potentially vulnerable pupils is rigorous.

Pupils said they feel very safe and well cared for in the school. They feel very confident that adults will help them if needed. Pupils of all ages talk with knowledge about the ways they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and online. The overwhelming majority of parents expressed the view that you and the staff keep children safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- One of the areas I wanted to explore with you was how well you cater for pupils who struggle with their learning. The quality of teaching and learning in the school is such that the vast majority of pupils who have initially struggled with their learning in English and mathematics have caught up by the end of key stage 1. For those pupils who have not, you keep a close eye on their learning and make sure that their individual learning needs are carefully planned. These are meticulously met in the classroom and through support offered in small groups or individually. Consequently, these pupils have every opportunity to achieve to the best of their abilities.
- A line of enquiry was to explore with you the quality of provision in subjects other than English and mathematics. You rightly pride yourselves on offering pupils a good-quality curriculum in subjects other than English and mathematics. Curriculum leaders are enthusiastic about their subjects, knowledgeable and hard working. Each subject is assessed to ensure that pupils make progress across the whole curriculum. This information is also used effectively by curriculum leaders to identify opportunities for staff training and to inform governors. Pupils said how much they enjoy their learning in the wider curriculum, and they respond well to the ways you make learning lively and engaging for them. When I spoke to pupils, they said they particularly enjoy science, history and music. However, they quickly added that they like all subjects because they are 'fun and interesting' and said, 'We are challenged to find out and think about new things.'
- Attendance was another line of enquiry. It is a high priority for the school and is currently above the national average. You have thorough systems for monitoring attendance and good attendance is frequently celebrated. You have been very successful in reducing the number of pupils who are regularly absent. Your

increased focus on these pupils has resulted in some notable successes. As a result, the number of pupils persistently absent has decreased so that it is now below the national average.

- Finally, we agreed to identify some of the school's strengths. You have an accurate, reflective and honest view of the school's strengths and priorities. You have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and these are shared by staff and governors. The governing body is supportive, challenges you appropriately and makes an important contribution towards the strong practice that is evident in the school. Consequently, there is an excellent capacity to consolidate the strengths you already demonstrate and to continue to improve the school further.
- Another strength is your high expectations. These start in the early years, where children benefit from a great start to school life and are well equipped to move on to Year 1. The gathering and use of assessment information throughout the school is exemplary. Senior leaders have established a simple and effective system that staff at all levels use very successfully. Consequently, staff know pupils very well and use ongoing assessment flexibly to adjust planning to ensure that pupils' needs are met swiftly and that all pupils are challenged.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to build on the improvements emerging in reading and mathematics so that as many middle-ability pupils as possible achieve higher standards
- continue with the excellent work being done in developing some subjects, so that they are of a similarly high standard as English and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and key stage leaders. I also met with curriculum leaders and the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding records. I met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke on the telephone to a representative of Warrington local authority and your school improvement partner. We visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of the 157 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of 11 parents who talked with me before the school day. I took account of the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke with staff during the day. I also met with a group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. I looked at school documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; information related to the work of your governing body and documents relating to safeguarding.