

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



20 December 2018

Mr Craig Tallon
Headteacher
Woodcroft Primary School
Goldbeaters Grove
Edgware
Middlesex
HA8 0QF

Dear Mr Tallon

Short inspection of Woodcroft Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 December 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your experienced leadership team give the school ongoing stability while establishing new priorities. These include the development of the wider curriculum to make Woodcroft Primary school a unique place to learn. For example, you have developed an 'arts charter' and encouraged pupils' participation in dance, music and sports. Pupils told me that they valued these opportunities. They spoke enthusiastically about taking part in a range of extra-curricular clubs.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked to improve the quality of teaching and learning in reading. Pupils' attainment in phonics has risen significantly. In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check was well above the national average. Pupils' strong progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 has been maintained. However, there are inconsistencies in the progress of current pupils, with weaknesses in boys' progress in some year groups, particularly in key stage 2. This is a priority for school improvement.

Woodcroft Primary School is a safe and supportive place to learn. All the pupils I spoke to told me that they feel safe at school and thoroughly enjoy their learning. When asked how to improve the school further, one pupil shared a view widely held by others, that 'school should be open for even longer'. Pupils told me that some pupils do not behave as well as they could but that adults deal with any issues swiftly. During the inspection, pupils behaved well and demonstrated positive attitudes to their learning. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

They speak positively about the approachability of senior leaders and staff.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's priorities. For example, they have a clear oversight of leaders' actions to improve reading, including the quality of library provision. Governors have a broad range of skills and their commitment is shown by their regular visits to the school to improve their understanding of the quality of education provided. For example, during 'governor open days', governors tour the site with pupils to gather information about pupils' learning and behaviour.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that the school's safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks are thorough, and staff training reflects the latest statutory guidance, including that relating to female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty.

The safeguarding team includes staff with different roles across the school. This helps leaders to gain an accurate understanding of the needs of individual pupils and their families. Leaders meet regularly to review the effectiveness of support for vulnerable pupils. They work well with external agencies to provide families and pupils with wide-ranging support.

Leaders have initiated a well-being project, working with external specialists to gather the views of parents, staff and pupils. This has helped staff to deepen their understanding of safeguarding and to raise their awareness of particular issues. One outcome has been that leaders have provided pupils with more opportunities to share their concerns. Pupils who have been appointed as 'peer mediators' carry out their roles with maturity and are well regarded by other pupils. Pupils told me that the mediators 'were like teachers who help to solve our problems'. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for, including in teaching pupils how to keep safe using online technology.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to check leaders' effectiveness in improving pupils' reading. We identified this because, over the last four years, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading has not been as strong at the end of the key stage as that in writing or mathematics.
- Reading is well led and leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Their actions are making a difference, particularly in improving pupils' phonic knowledge and skills. Pupils' attainment in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 is now very high. In key stage 1, pupils apply their phonics skills well to their reading and writing.
- In key stage 2, teachers help pupils to develop their inference skills using a variety of texts. For example, pupils discussed the authors' use of language for the book 'A Christmas Carol'. Pupils developed a good understanding because of adults' probing questioning. Additionally, pupils now have access to a wider variety of books in their classrooms and the school library. As a result, they read

widely and more often. The use of Home Link Books helps teachers and parents to check that pupils read regularly.

- Despite these improvements, the quality of teaching of reading is not consistent through all year groups. At times, teachers' expectations of pupils' responses to reading comprehension are not sufficiently high. Too often, pupils read short extracts rather than entire books and novels. This limits pupils' deeper inference skills. Some boys demonstrate a lack of fluency in their reading and are not provided with the focused support that they need to improve.
- Overall, the picture of reading in the school is one of improvement. Pupils' attainment has risen at the end of key stage 1 in reading. In 2018, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining at least the expected standard in reading was in line with the national average. Even so, more needs to be done so that higher proportions of pupils attain the expected and the high standard.
- We next looked at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve pupils' writing. Pupils' progress in writing has been well above the national average since the previous inspection. However, leaders noted some inconsistencies and identified as a priority the need to develop pupils' writing in subjects across the curriculum.
- The curriculum design helps pupils write at length across a range of subjects, including history. For example, pupils wrote interesting pieces linked to their history topic, the Mayans; pupils used their subject knowledge to write their own myths. The school's 'AIM @ Arts' charter provides opportunities for pupils to participate and review different types of creative art. During the inspection, pupils reviewed a Year 2 play and thought carefully about how to write effectively as an audience member.
- Leaders have worked to promote consistency in the teaching of handwriting and this is showing positive impact in some year groups. However, in upper key stage 2, teachers' expectations of boys' handwriting are variable. Leaders also identified the need to improve pupils' vocabulary. Typically, adults use prompts and questioning well to help pupils use a variety of words in their writing. Sometimes, however, adults do not check pupils' accurate understanding of words that they use in their writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning in reading continues to improve by:
 - developing pupils' inference skills through exposure to high-quality reading books during their reading lessons
 - developing boys' fluency in reading, particularly in key stage 2
- teachers' expectations of boys' writing, particularly in key stage 2, are consistently high
- teachers check that pupils have an accurate understanding of words that they use in their writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Noeman Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited classrooms and scrutinised pupils' books, accompanied by senior leaders. I carried out a review of the school's documentation, including the school's safeguarding information. I held meetings with senior leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. I gathered the views of pupils in lessons and in the playground. Finally, I considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 26 responses from parents, 19 responses from pupils and 24 responses from staff members.