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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Julie Henry
Headteacher
Wrockwardine Wood Church of England Junior School
Church Road
Trench
Telford
Shropshire
TF2 7HG

Dear Mrs Henry

Short inspection of Wrockwardine Wood Church of England Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 since the school was judged to be good in November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Academic standards at the end of Year 6 have risen to be above national figures. This is because teaching is effective and enables the majority of pupils to make good progress in all year groups. Your work to improve pupils' writing, which was the key recommendation made by the previous inspection, has been successful. Standards have risen and the quality and presentation of pupils' writing is notable, both in books and on many colourful displays around the school. It is clear that pupils are taught to do their best and to understand the link between effort and achievement. You also make sure they learn to care for others and consider ways they can use their time and skills to help out.

You and other leaders are aware that pupils' progress in reading is not quite as strong as the rates seen in writing and mathematics. In response, you have put in place many worthwhile initiatives to inspire an interest in books and develop pupils' comprehension skills. All in all, the leadership of teaching and learning is strong.

Most pupils attend regularly and on time, behave well, and say they feel safe and happy at school. Parents report good communication between home and school. Most parents who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to others.

Staff receive clear guidance about teaching and learning, and a sense of shared purpose is evident. However, some of the information leaders provide to staff about other aspects of the school's work is rather brief or is communicated in informal ways. In contrast to this, some of the school's files about safety matters are overflowing and would benefit from an overhaul.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are taught how to look after themselves and others in different situations. They are suitably informed about matters such as e-safety and the dangers of extreme behaviours and are guided to act responsibly. Pupils told me that the school's rules are fair and help to keep everybody safe.

The school's checks on visitors and adults who work at the school are fit for purpose. Records are up to date and stored securely. The school site is well maintained, first-aid treatment is readily available when needed, and staff receive regular training about safety matters.

Having said this, some aspects of administration would benefit from refreshment. For example, the school's risk assessment file is bursting with out-of-date paperwork which makes it hard to find more recent information. You provide staff with written guidance about what to do in certain situations, but you and other leaders do not always check that all staff have read it. While statutory requirements are met and the staff I spoke with could explain what they would do if they had a concern about a child's safety or welfare, some of your documented guidance lacks helpful detail that would ensure absolute clarity and consistency of expectation. In addition, some clerical errors in key paperwork have gone undetected, which is careless. In other instances, your records of poor behaviour incidents in school are rather brief. While poor behaviour is not common, this lack of detail reduces your ability to extract learning that might help to prevent recurrence. None of these administrative slips cause significant problems and there is no suggestion that staff are not vigilant. Indeed, I saw several examples of when staff have acted without fear or favour in response to concerns. However, if left unchecked, small oversights can lead to larger problems. You and other leaders now need to apply the same level of organisation and scrutiny to safety matters as you do to teaching and learning.

Inspection findings

- You and your senior leaders are quite new in post. However, you have not been slow to make your mark. You have shared out responsibilities in a sensible and proportionate way and set about making sure the school builds further on its good performance. You keep a close eye on teaching and learning, and the information that you provide for governors in your headteacher reports is skilfully put together. These reports provide key information about the school's performance, presented in a way that requires governors to interrogate it and raise questions. Consequently, they come to meetings armed with evaluative

observations that inform their discussions and help to shape school strategy. To supplement this, you seek external advice to validate or challenge your own evaluations. I found this advice to be well-tuned to the school's needs.

- You aim to work closely with the neighbouring infant school in order to reach agreement about pupils' readiness for learning at junior school. By and large, staff from the two schools agree on judgements. It is fair to say that most pupils start Year 3 with skills and knowledge that are in line with age-related expectations, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection.
- Once pupils start at the school, you and your leadership team track their progress from Years 3 to 6 with careful attention. Leaders identify special educational needs swiftly and put in place effective support. Similarly, teachers give the most able pupils plenty of challenge in lessons to make sure they continue to press on briskly with their learning. Indeed, your use of assessment information to drive next steps in learning is a strength. During this inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils were seen to be tackling demanding work about decimals and percentages with success. This was because they had a secure understanding of place value, previous work had prepared them well and the teacher's explanations were spot on. Regular 'killer questions' also serve to deepen their understanding and inject a sense of mischievous fun into learning. In other classes, too, teachers' subject knowledge, explanations and attention to pupils' responses all stand out as features that facilitate successful learning in different subjects. Consequently, pupils do well across the curriculum.
- Furthermore, pupils are attentive and responsive in class. They listen to their teachers and to one another. Infectious class catchphrases such as 'hocus pocus', to which pupils cry out in response 'everybody focus', also add to the spirit of togetherness and reinforce classroom expectations.
- Work in books shows that current pupils are achieving in line with, or above, age-related expectations. The standards of presentation, especially of pupils' writing, can be very impressive, as can the content of their work. School displays about horror stories, roller-coaster rides and the ill-fated Titanic all contain some high-quality pieces of writing that have been planned with imagination and due regard for the skills pupils need to practise and develop.
- You have identified, quite rightly, that progress rates in reading are not as strong as those seen recently in writing and mathematics. Your analysis of past and current pupils' performance has enabled you to pinpoint the key areas to focus on and the key groups of pupils to support. You have set about doing this with purposeful rigour. Pupils have a 'love to read' book, in which they tackle work that develops their comprehension skills. Every class has a storybook area where pupils are asked to think about key questions before, during and after reading. Pupils are also prompted to find out and record the meanings of words they do not understand. Around the school, and in the inviting central school library, groups of pupils frequently read with adults. All staff and pupils know that reading is a cornerstone of the school's work and the key to success in many different subjects. In short, there is an active reading culture in the school that is driving improvement.
- The special educational needs leader presents as capable and informed. She

ensures that practice in the school is well organised and reflects the most recent guidance and requirements. Most importantly, she checks that teaching and support is making a positive difference to the pupils. She ensures staff are alert to the full range of needs in the school and plans for, and oversees, provision with an evaluative eye. One novel approach to building pupils' confidence and self-esteem is the school's forest cabin or 'HQ' as the pupils call it. This outbuilding, located next to the school's extensive outdoor learning area, is used by younger pupils who find it hard to adjust to life and learning at junior school. Here, pupils take inspiration from the outdoors to generate enthusiasm and resilience at school and it is clearly a much-valued and effective facility. Elsewhere, pupils receive extra lessons in the Learning Launchpad room and a nurture group called mini-miracles operates to help pupils manage their emotions in constructive ways. All of this provision helps to make sure that no one – whatever their needs – slips through the net.

- Your work to improve pupils' attendance is paying off and attendance rates have risen. Most pupils arrive on time in the mornings, look smart and are keen to learn. Exclusions from school are rare but you have had cause to use this sanction in response to serious breaches of the school's rules. My checks on your behaviour policy and practice found that staff set consistent expectations. They aim to get the best from pupils and manage any instances of challenging behaviour in firm, fair and constructive ways. In shaping the school's expectations for pupils' behaviour you have sought pupils' and parents' views. In fact, the input from pupils in this, and other aspects of school life, is a notable strength.
- During this inspection, the pupils I spoke with showed a mature understanding of the purposes of consultation, democracy and equality of opportunity. Recently, for example, you noticed a difference between the performance of boys and girls in mathematics. In response, you gathered feedback from pupils about how to improve mathematics teaching. By listening to pupils and also reviewing aspects of teaching, you refined provision so that boys and girls now get equal chance to shine. It is apparent that pupils regularly have a say in how things are done and, while they understand that adults need to have the final say, they are confident that their ideas will be listened to and valued.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to build upon, evaluate and refine their work to develop pupils' comprehension skills and interest in reading so that standards rise to match those reached in mathematics and writing
- the administrative systems for recording safety-related information are reviewed, so that important information is readily available when needed
- routines for sharing information with staff are managed in a more formal and efficient way so there is no room for doubt about expectations and lines of accountability.

I am copying this letter to the director of education for the Diocese of Lichfield, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Telford and Wrekin. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and teaching staff. I also met with the school's business manager, three governors, and an external education adviser. I carried out short observations of teaching in all year groups, watched an assembly and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons and at breaktime and heard some pupils read in class. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

I paid particular attention to several key lines of enquiry. These included: progress since the previous inspection, the school's work to boost progress in reading, provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance, safeguarding, and the quality of leadership and management.

By the end of the inspection, there were 63 recent responses on Parent View. There were 22 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 14 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I took account of these responses and talked with some pupils and parents about how school staff listen to their views. I looked at a number of documents, including: pupils' progress information, the school's own evaluation of its performance, improvement plans, information about the work of the governing body, leaders' written reports to governors, records of checks on the quality of teaching and learning, and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe. I asked members of staff, pupils and parents about safeguarding matters.