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Mrs J Freeman
Headteacher
Kings Wood School and Nursery
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Dear Mrs Freeman

Short inspection of Kings Wood School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Leaders' actions to address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection, and to raise attainment across the school, have not been wholly successful. Although the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined improved slightly in 2017, standards remained below the national average. Fewer of the most able pupils reached the higher standard in 2017 compared with the previous year. Outcomes for pupils in Year 2 in 2017 were well below the national average at the expected standard. Very few pupils achieved a greater depth of understanding in reading and writing at the end of Year 2. No Year 2 pupils achieved a greater depth of understanding in mathematics. The progress of current pupils in Years 1 to 6 is variable, and the school's own information shows that some pupils have made limited progress.

School leaders have introduced a new system to track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics but, in discussions with you and your deputy headteacher, it is clear that there are concerns over the accuracy of assessments. You recognise that some teachers lack confidence in making judgements on pupils' attainment. You are working with external partners to carry out further checks on judgements alongside teachers to confirm their accuracy and provide a secure basis for measuring pupils' progress in the future.

You have successfully created groups of leaders to take responsibility for the development of curriculum areas and to provide pastoral support for pupils. Some subject leaders are new to their role. You ensure that appropriate training is put in place to develop their skills and increase their effectiveness. However, at present, subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in analysing the outcomes for all groups of pupils across the school. This means that they are not picking up underachievement quickly enough to implement effective strategies to address pupils' misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils display positive attitudes to learning in lessons. They work well together. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Pupils show courtesy and respect towards their teachers, other adults and their peers. They appreciate the wide range of additional opportunities provided for them, such as visits from authors, clubs, sporting activities and visits to the forest school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils I spoke to said they feel safe in school and the vast majority who completed the online questionnaire agree. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through a range of carefully planned activities. The safeguarding curriculum covers a range of safety issues, for example, personal safety when using social media, stranger danger, peer pressure and racism. Pupils learn about keeping safe when using the internet, and have a good understanding about many bullying issues that they may face and how they might deal with them.

You have ensured that suitable numbers of senior staff are trained at the higher level to provide strong leadership in this important area of the school's work. The safeguarding policy is reviewed regularly and includes references to all the most up-to-date guidance on keeping children safe. All staff are regularly updated in line with current guidance. Training at an appropriate level is provided to all staff. Newly appointed staff receive good-quality induction to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities. All staff are expected to read current guidance and understand their roles and responsibilities to keep children safe from harm, including their duties to prevent extremism and radicalisation.

The school seeks the support of other agencies when appropriate to ensure the safety of the pupils in their care. All safeguarding documents and procedures are fit for purpose and successfully implemented.

Inspection findings

- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to select different levels of challenge in lessons. Sometimes the selected activities are not matched well enough to pupils' learning needs. Pupils say they enjoy their learning, but some say the work is not challenging enough for them.
- Evidence from pupils' current work in their books shows that, very often, pupils do not always show a pride in the presentation of their work. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting,

punctuation and presentation. Younger pupils are not developing effective skills in forming letters correctly and some older pupils have not yet developed a neat, legible joined handwriting style.

- School leaders recognise that there is more to be done to improve pupils' spelling skills. The English subject leaders are trialling a new approach to improve pupils' spelling, but it is too soon to see the difference this is making in pupils' written work.
- Governors are supportive of the school and know that outcomes for some pupils are not strong enough. During the last academic year, there was an emphasis on improving outcomes in reading. Governors invested funding to enable school leaders to purchase new reading material to provide greater access for pupils to read at home and at school.
- Governors were aware that pupils' reading comprehension skills needed to improve and were supportive of new strategies to enable pupils to read individually and in groups. Pupils are positive about the broader range of reading material available to them, and enjoy the opportunities to become reading buddies.
- The mathematics subject leader is attending training to ensure that the teaching of mathematics enables pupils to learn to master their mathematics skills and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to apply their reasoning skills to solve problems in mathematics. However, the progress pupils make over time is variable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress improves in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups of pupils, so that a higher proportion of pupils reach the expected standard and the most able pupils reach the higher standards
- the accuracy of assessments is secured to ensure that teachers plan activities that meet the learning needs of all groups of pupils
- subject leaders ensure that effective strategies are implemented and monitored to secure improved outcomes for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher and your English and mathematics subject leaders, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, your senior administrator, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, external reports and documentation relating to safeguarding. Pupils' progress in their learning over time was checked by looking at their work in books. Together we observed pupils' learning in four classes.