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Mrs Jill Robertson  
Headteacher  
Offley Primary School  
Offley Road  
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Cheshire  
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Dear Mrs Robertson

### **Short inspection of Offley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 January 2016, 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 March 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education and the school is improving quickly. Since you became headteacher over a year ago you have used your exceptional leadership skills to make significant changes. You have quickly and accurately identified the aspects of the school that need improvement and are tackling them well. The quality of teachers' planning and teaching have improved as has the performance management of staff. You have established a culture of higher expectations and of valuing children's rights, views and opinions. Pupils are now asked in lessons to think more and to produce higher-quality work. There is still a way to go to increase the proportion of pupils making good progress to exceed the expected level of work for their age and to strengthen the curriculum so that it covers the full range of diversity.

At the previous inspection the school was asked to improve provision in the early years. Outcomes at the end of Reception were too low in 2015, given the children's starting points. This was partially because of too many changes in staff. Children's learning was significantly disrupted. This has now been rectified and a stable and effective teaching team is in place and children are making much better progress. Unlike at the previous inspection, there are now no differences in the quality of teaching between the two classes. When children are working by themselves away from structured teaching time, most are occupied in purposeful learning. In contrast, there has been very little progress since the previous music inspection in

2012. In some ways things have got worse with a lack of instrument tuition for all pupils. Again, you and senior leaders are tackling this issue and have appointed a highly knowledgeable leader of music who has plans in place to quickly revitalise the teaching of music.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

When you started working at the school in September 2014, a large number of staff had not been vetted to work with children. Now there are secure systems in place to make sure all adults working with pupils are correctly checked for any previous convictions. During the inspection I noted some administrative errors in the single central register of the employment checks; these were quickly rectified by the school's staff. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Systems to protect children are effective because you and the staff are persistent in following up any safety issues. You make sure parking outside the school is safe for children to get to school without incident. You are also persistent in following up any safeguarding issues, making daily calls and emails to social services or other agencies until they take action to follow up your concerns. You and the staff work well with other agencies such as the police, education welfare officer and the domestic violence team to make sure everyone is working together for the good of the child. You have made sure all staff have been trained in how to prevent extremism and radicalisation and other aspects of safeguarding. Although the child protection policy does not meet statutory requirements, the school's procedures and written documentation do meet requirements and are effective. Since you started at the school as headteacher you have taken swift and effective action to improve the quality of safeguarding and child protection.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since you started at the school you have made some important changes. You have changed the way teachers plan so that, instead of teachers planning pupils' work far in advance, they now teach lessons which are more closely based on the needs of pupils in each class. Similarly, you have changed the way teachers assess pupils' work so that they quickly glean what pupils are good, or not so good, at and then plan activities which will move them on in their learning.
- You and the deputy headteacher have taken action to make better use of the government's extra funding to support pupils who, because of their circumstances, are deemed to be disadvantaged. There is now a clearer focus on the spending in the school's budget. There is greater accountability to make sure there is some impact from the extra funding. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance for example was only just over 93% at the end of July. Leaders have taken action to fund breakfast club and other initiatives. As a result this group of pupils are on time for school and their attendance has risen by 2% to be closer to non-disadvantaged pupils. There is still some way to go to raise disadvantaged pupils' attainment across the school. The leaders know about this and are already taking action that is effective.

- You and other leaders have taken action to tackle staffing disruption in the Reception classes and a dip in standards. A new leader is in place and has, in a short time, made changes to accelerate children's progress. Staff expectations are high. For example, children were expected to use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) to read, write and spell words and put them into sentences. They were asked to sort animals into carnivores, omnivores and herbivores and had an array of purposeful activities from which they could choose to develop their knowledge and understanding of animals and their habitats.
- Governors provide good oversight of the quality of teaching and of pupils' assessment information. This allows them to ask increasingly more searching questions of staff. They have a better understanding about the impact of government funding such as the pupil premium on pupils' outcomes. They now need to have a tighter grip on checking how well the school meets its statutory duties. Some policies for example do not meet statutory expectations or reflect the good work happening in school.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support and challenge to the school and so the impact of its input is limited. It does however provide challenge and frequent updates to make sure headteachers are kept abreast of development and any new requirements.
- The school does not cover the expectations and requirements of the 2010 Equality Act as well as it should. A tour of the school and a scrutiny of pupils' work and curriculum plans revealed only male authors, artists, figures in history and scientists and no women other than Rosa Parks. The curriculum needs to improve to reflect the full range of British society. Policies such as those for anti-bullying, behaviour and equality do not reflect the full range of protected characteristics or properly identify all the different types of derogatory language and behaviours.
- Almost all pupils in Key Stage 2 made expected progress in 2015; the pupils with special educational needs in particular made very good progress. Fewer middle- and higher-ability pupils than the national average, particularly in mathematics, made more than expected progress. The headteacher and leaders have already identified the need to accelerate pupils' progress and have changed the way teachers plan and set up activities to make sure they are based on what pupils need to learn next. The higher-attaining pupils' books revealed they are spending time finding facts and answering questions but there is little evidence of thinking, experimentation, explanation or reasoning about what they have discovered.
- A few parents have raised concerns about pupils' behaviour and bullying. No racist or bullying incidents have been logged since the headteacher started at the school. Most parents and almost all staff and pupils who completed the online surveys agreed that behaviour is good and that bullying rarely happens and when it does it is quickly tackled.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum and school policies comply with the Equality Act 2010 and reflect the full range of diversity in British society.
- middle- and higher-attaining pupils are challenged and make more than expected progress, particularly in 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 Cheshire East Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

- I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the family support worker. I also met with four governors and with a representative of the local authority.
- I observed teaching in the Reception class and looked at some pupils' work from Years 3 to 6. We conducted two joint observations and a joint walk around the school to look at equality and diversity.
- I considered the views of 13 pupils, 123 parents and 27 staff who completed Ofsted's online surveys.
- I looked through documentation including attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding policies and information, the school's improvement plans and its self-evaluation.