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Mrs Tina Blankley
Headteacher
Chancel Primary School
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Dear Mrs Blankley

Short inspection of Chancel Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 February 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 July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school. Since your appointment in September 2013, you have taken action to ensure that high-quality teaching, learning and assessment have continued to lead to good and outstanding outcomes for pupils.

Teaching in the school is consistently good or better. The strongest teaching is characterised by teachers and teaching assistants working well together to involve pupils in discussing and improving their work. Teachers provide interesting activities which spark pupils' curiosity and capture their imagination so that they make rapid progress.

Appropriate books and a range of media resources are used to interest both boys and girls in reading. Pupils' writing skills are developed by the explicit modelling of good writing and ample opportunities for them to write at length across a range of subjects.

The school's marking policy is consistently applied. Feedback from staff focuses on improving pupils' literacy skills and pupils respond well to comments to improve their work. Pupils told me that they find the time that they are given to reflect and respond to marking and feedback most helpful. They use these opportunities well to improve subsequent pieces of work.

Frequent opportunities are provided in a range of subjects to encourage pupils to practise their literacy skills, but less emphasis has been given to the promotion of numeracy across the curriculum. School leaders are aware of this, coupled with the fact that pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing, and they are taking steps to make improvements in this area. These actions are not yet fully embedded so their impact has not been maximised.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are polite and considerate and enjoy coming to school, with most having high attendance. Staff, parents and pupils told me that pupils are safe in school.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection as you have taken effective action to maintain strengths and address areas for improvement. You have been well supported by staff and the governors to improve the standard of education in the school and to create a positive and ambitious culture.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are secure and policies are well kept and up to date, making reference to the most recent guidance. Staff have received relevant information and training about keeping children safe, so prompt and appropriate action can be taken if required.

The school has a culture for keeping children safe. Established routines are in place to keep children safe in school, in the early years provision and at the before- and after-school sessions. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and have considered a range of topics including e-safety, 'stranger danger' and road safety. Staff have also had training on preventing extremism.

Inspection findings

- School leaders know the school well. You and governors have high expectations of staff and pupils and demonstrate the capacity to improve the school further.
- The arrangements for managing staff performance are effective. Staff are set appropriate targets and leaders reward good-quality teaching and outcomes. Targets are linked to the school's priorities and the teachers' standards and training and development are actively encouraged.
- Outcomes are good throughout the school and some pupils make outstanding progress. For example, disadvantaged pupils in the school make better progress than other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well supported and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects, including reading and writing. However, actions taken to improve progress in mathematics are not yet leading to pupils acquiring a deep understanding of mathematical concepts.
- There is a great deal of highly effective teaching in the school. However, teachers do not always use the accurate information available to them to plan activities

which challenge pupils of all abilities. In particular, teachers do not ask enough of most-able pupils in reading so that they exceed the expected rates of progress to reach the highest attainment levels.

- The broad curriculum is complemented by extra-curricular activities such as art, cooking, choir, homework, science and a range of sports. These after-school clubs are well attended.
- Staff develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well and actively promote fundamental British values. This is in line with the school's vision to 'develop the citizens of tomorrow through the best education of today'.
- Staff promote equality of opportunity and understanding of diversity exceptionally well. Pupils told me that unkindness is extremely rare and they are confident that any problems will be dealt with quickly and effectively if they arise.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in class and during social time. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff and each other and older pupils take care of younger children informally and through the buddy system.
- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and their opinions are valued. Consequently, they are proud of their school and take pride in their appearance and school work.
- Almost all parents are very positive about the school. They value the close working relationship with staff and feel that their children are well taught, make good progress, behave well and are safe. A very large majority think that the school is well led and managed and would recommend the school to another parent.
- Children in the early years enjoy high-quality teaching in a safe and stimulating environment. The range of subjects provides varied and imaginative experiences leading to good rates of progress. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The before- and after-school care is of high quality. Pupils are well-looked-after and take part in a range of activities which promote learning, fun and cooperation. Systems to keep children safe are robust.
- Additional funding is used extremely well. Pupil premium funding provides additional support and activities which have led to outstanding outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Sports funding has improved the quality of provision and increased participation rates in sporting activities. Sports coaches provide expert teaching for pupils and coaching for staff to improve their practice.
- Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and take part in regular exercise. Sports clubs, such as football, netball and multi-sports are very well attended.
- Governors know the school well and have provided high-quality support and challenge. They have an appropriate range of skills, knowledge and understanding and have taken opportunities to develop these further. Governors are committed to the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and perform their statutory duties with care. They have ensured that the effective deployment of staff and resources, including primary sports funding and pupil premium, have led to strong outcomes for pupils.
- The local authority has given appropriate light-touch support for the school. This includes targeted input, such as support for the early years provision, as required.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- staff use the information available to them to plan activities which lead to rapid progress for pupils of all abilities
- the most-able pupils are challenged to make accelerated progress, particularly in reading
- actions to improve progress in mathematics are embedded and have maximum impact.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. I met formally with a group of staff and a group of pupils. We made eight short visits to lessons. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the day and considered parental opinion through 76 responses and 30 additional comments made through Parent View. I evaluated information on pupils' progress and scrutinised other records about keeping pupils safe, their behaviour and attendance. I also looked at staff training records and information about managing teachers' performance.