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Mrs Paula Head  
Headteacher  
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West Yorkshire  
LS12 5LA

Dear Mrs Head

### **Short inspection of Cobden Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 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 November 2010.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your high expectations for every pupil are at the heart of the school's work. You have a deep commitment to providing the rich experiences and meaningful learning opportunities you know your pupils need. You are constantly looking for ways to improve your school because you are passionate about every pupil being 'the best they can be'. Year 6 pupils proudly describe their school as 'awesome'.

Inspectors identified two areas for improvement at the school's last inspection: first, to improve teaching by making sure that pupils, especially the most-able pupils, are set challenging work and know how to reach the next level of achievement. Second, to provide pupils with more opportunities to learn about different faiths and other cultures in the wider world. You have tackled these areas for improvement well and the impact of your actions can be seen in the broader and more challenging curriculum, better teaching and improved outcomes for the most-able pupils.

You and your senior team have a clear view of your school's strengths and the areas needing further work. You check teachers' work thoroughly and keep a close eye on pupils' learning and progress. As a result, rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 have improved and are above the national averages. You know, for example, that the progress and attainment of Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics declined in 2015. As a result of swift and decisive action, current Year 2 pupils are making faster progress and are on track to achieve better outcomes at the end of key stage 1.

Governors share your high expectations and your unwillingness to accept less than the best for your pupils. They check the reports and information they receive carefully and visit the school regularly. Recently, governors met with Year 6 pupils to find out more about what pupils like and what would make Cobden even better. This helped them to test whether what you tell them can be seen 'on the ground'. As a result, governors were more informed and better able to hold you, and other senior leaders, to account.

The actions taken by you, senior leaders and governors have placed the school in a strong position to secure further improvement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school because they trust you and the other adults who care for them. Crucially, pupils know that you will listen to them if they need your help or support.

You know your pupils and their families well and are alert to the things that make children vulnerable. You work closely with other professionals and services and are quick to act when pupils need additional help or protection. Case studies illustrate the positive impact of this work and show that you have taken robust action when needed.

Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are at the heart of the school's work. The strong emphasis on being respectful and responsible, combined with the richer range of opportunities to find out about the wider world, is helping pupils learn how to be good citizens. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and growing confidence are testament to the effectiveness of this aspect of the school's work.

### **Inspection findings**

- You have managed a number of staff changes and new appointments since the last inspection. You have secured the unequivocal support of staff, who say 'it is wonderful to be part of such a hard-working and positive team'. You have worked closely with teachers, and middle leaders, to improve their practice and build a strong and cohesive team. Teachers value the training and support they receive and are committed to improving their work. Importantly, you have shown that you will not accept less than the best and, with the support of governors, you have tackled weak practice head on.
- Since the last inspection, you have redesigned the curriculum and the way you assess and track pupils' learning and progress. By seizing the opportunities associated with the new national curriculum, you have raised everyone's expectations and ensured that all pupils, especially the most-able, are challenged. Pupils relish the opportunities they now have to use and apply what they know and to grapple with real-life problems. Pupils' learning and progress is assessed and tracked carefully. You and your senior and

middle leaders take great care to check that teachers' assessments accurately match the standard of work seen in pupils' books and folders.

- You have improved the aspects of teaching that were weaker at the time of the last inspection. Expectations are higher and there is greater challenge for the most-able pupils. In mathematics, for example, the most-able pupils are set more complex problems and are challenged to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Pupils know how well they are doing and the marking and feedback in books identifies what they need to do to improve their work. Occasionally, however, misconceptions and errors in pupils' work are missed because teachers do not question pupils to check whether their knowledge and understanding are secure before they move on to new work.
- The proportion of children in early years achieving a good level of development increased in 2015 but remained below the national average. From starting points which are below expectations, especially in communication and language, children make increasingly strong progress. A higher proportion of children are on track to achieve a good level of development in 2016.
- At key stage 2, rates of progress are above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils matches the progress of other pupils nationally. The picture at key stage 1 is not as positive. Although there is an improving trend in attainment in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics declined in 2015. Current assessment information and the work in books and folders shows that Year 2 pupils are making faster progress in writing and mathematics and are on track to achieve better outcomes in 2016.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is strongly promoted throughout the school. Pupils are increasingly knowledgeable about the wider world and are forthright about the values of tolerance and respect for other people. Pupils place great value on being responsible members of their community and are rightly proud of their school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers develop their use of questioning to thoroughly check pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- pupils in key stage 1 learn well and make the same fast progress seen in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Nick Whittaker

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and other senior and middle leaders, pupils, a representative from the local authority and two representatives from the governing body. I visited lessons with you, looked at the work in pupils' books and folders and talked to them about their learning. I looked at the survey results from Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and considered 10 responses to the staff questionnaire. I examined a range of documents, including information about safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan and information about pupils' progress.