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Mrs Sara Morris
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Morris

Short inspection of Oak Meadow Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You provide strong, well-informed leadership and inspire trust from others. Consequently, you have led this school with success. Under your leadership, the good standards seen at the time of the previous inspection have been upheld. Together with the governors, you celebrate the school's successes and are upfront about where further improvements are needed. In addition, you have created an incredibly positive culture in the school, where pupils' safety and welfare are given a high priority and the seeds of self-belief and trust are nurtured. Each pupil is recognised for their individual qualities, and everyone has equal opportunity to participate and achieve in many different ways. Consequently, pupils grow into confident, friendly and cooperative youngsters who reach good academic standards. It is clear that pupils who pass through Oak Meadow Primary are well prepared for the next steps in their lives and education when they leave at the end of Year 6.

The vast majority of parents who expressed a view, either online or in conversation with me, were extremely positive about the school's work. By the end of the inspection, 100% of respondents to the online questionnaire said they would recommend the school to other parents. Pupils, too, value their time at Oak Meadow Primary and want to do their best. Inspection evidence supports parents'

and pupils' positive views about the school.

Teaching has continued to develop since the previous inspection, and you have made sure that staff have received regular training and feedback about their work. You have been quick to act when, on occasions, teaching has not been up to the high standard you expect. Even so, while teaching overall continues to be good, it is not quite as effective in mathematics as it is in other subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and staff understand their duty of care and make sure that all the school's procedures operate correctly and efficiently. Records of checks on staff and information about pupils are kept up to date and stored securely. In addition to the formal routines that are in place, all staff are attentive to pupils' day-to-day welfare. They watch out for changes in pupils' behaviour and are alert to any signs that indicate a pupil may have problems, either at home or at school. In turn, pupils know that, if they have a concern, staff will listen and take action, when necessary. During this inspection, I found numerous examples of the school's extensive and effective work to support pupils and their families.

The school site is exceptionally well maintained and kept secure. Pupils learn how to stay safe in different situations, and around the school there are numerous displays and posters that remind pupils how to report concerns. Pupils told me that bullying is rare and good behaviour is the norm. Inspection evidence found this to be the case.

The school governors have effective routines in place to keep a check on this important aspect of the school's work. Consequently, they display a very good understanding of safeguarding and safety-related matters.

Inspection findings

- A key guiding light at Oak Meadow Primary School is provided by your capable leadership. Your judgement, and that of the deputy headteacher (soon to be the substantive headteacher following your retirement at the end of this term), is spot on. You lead staff and pupils with a relaxed efficiency that at once puts others at ease but also makes your high standards and expectations very clear. You read situations well and, together with the deputy headteacher, exercise calm wisdom and approachable authority. Through your own evaluations of the school's work, you have correctly identified that mathematics teaching has not been as strong as teaching in other subjects and you have done something about it. Consequently, standards in mathematics, which dipped in 2015, are on the up. This year, the majority of pupils have reached age-related expectations or above. Standards in reading and writing, which were above the national average in 2015, also look to be above age-related expectations this year. This informed ability to bring about improvements when necessary has been a significant factor in maintaining the school's good performance.

- Most children start school with levels of skill and knowledge that are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although a proportion has underdeveloped communication and language skills. Whatever their starting points, they make significant gains in the Reception classes because of the good-quality provision provided. Children are kept very busy on productive and worthwhile activities. Imaginative play and opportunities to learn outside are particular strengths. Children display very positive attitudes to learning and to one another and do very well during their first year at school. Consequently, the proportions of children reaching a good level of development have been above the national figure year after year. There is no doubt that children's achievements in the early years prepare them very well for learning further up the school.

- In key stage 1, teaching makes the most of this positive start. Teaching is well organised, good natured and effective. Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) teaching and the teaching of reading, in particular, are strong. Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge and receive regular training to keep them up to date with ways of working and resources. Pupils are taught in ability groups and the leader on phonics keeps a close eye on how well each and every pupil is doing. Any pupil who falls behind gets help so they catch up. Similarly, anyone who is forging ahead is quickly moved up to the next group. It is no surprise that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards for their age has been well above the national figure each year. In 2015, 92% of pupils reached this expected standard or above, which is considerably higher than the national figure of 77%. However, teaching does not just focus on the mechanics of reading. In all year groups, teachers regularly read to pupils and plan activities that generate interest in reading. During this inspection, for example, there were audible gasps of excitement when teachers announced that it was story time. In all classrooms, and around the school, there are displays that promote books, stories and reading. This work is evidently paying off. Pupils of all ages can talk about stories and books with informed interest, and standards in reading are above average at the end of both key stages.

- The breadth of the school curriculum in all year groups provides pupils with many opportunities to practise and develop key numeracy and literacy skills in meaningful ways. This often results in some high-quality work. My checks on some of the older key stage 2 pupils' English books, for instance, found some exceptionally strong writing. I also noted that teachers are quick to seize upon topical events to provide a stimulus for classwork. The recent EU referendum and the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, for example, were both used to generate thoughtful discussion and some high-quality written work. More than this, they also prompted pupils to reflect on the impact of their own and other people's decisions – both in the past and now – on the way we live, think and act. Through work such as this, and through worthy messages

promoted in assembly and in class, pupils are helped to consider and understand the values that guide and shape us.

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attendance has improved and persistent absence has reduced. A key factor in bringing about these improvements has been the work of the home-school liaison officer. She brings an approachable tenacity to her role and is highly effective. Every day, she and other school leaders are outside to welcome pupils and to check that all arrive on time. Any lateness or unexplained absence is noticed immediately and followed up swiftly. The school is quick to offer support or advice to families when it is needed but will also issue challenges to parents when it is clear that there are no good reasons for their children missing school.
- In a similar vein, the home-school liaison officer provides a listening ear to pupils should they have a concern. Staff, parents and pupils alike know that, if they have cause to seek advice or ask a question, they will be listened to by staff and leaders. Indeed, during this inspection, many parents who wrote to me or who spoke with me at the beginning of the school day highlighted the approachability of staff and the quality of care provided for their children. Many parents feel that staff listen to them and take notice of their concerns or requests. A number of parents wrote lengthy responses on Parent View to explain how the school had provided bespoke support for their children's specific circumstances.
- While teaching has continued to be effective overall, it is also true to say that, over time, teaching in mathematics has varied in quality. You are aware of this and have taken action to bring about improvement in the right places. Even so, the current quality of mathematics teaching is still not as consistent as that seen in reading and writing. In most classes, mathematics teaching is effective, and pupils are able to build carefully on what they already know. Teaching helps them to develop reasoning skills as they make choices about what they need to do next in order to arrive at solutions to tasks or problems. This, however, is not the case in all classes. In a few cases, and more so in key stage 2 than in key stage 1, the teaching of mathematics does not build progressively on pupils' previous work. When this happens, the level of challenge either escalates too quickly and pupils become confused, or they cover work they can do quite easily. In both instances, learning time is lost.
- Having said this, even when pupils become unsure of what is required or cannot manage a task, they display very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils persevere and want to succeed. They are proud of their school, behave very well and enjoy their lessons.
- I also noted the confidence of pupils, which manifests itself very clearly whenever they get the chance to perform. During a worthwhile assembly about the forthcoming 2016 Rio Olympics, for example, Year 5 pupils gave a rousing performance of a song they had composed about

life at Oak Meadow Primary. Later, and again in the school hall, other pupils sang, danced and played instruments in a lively and accomplished fashion. In both instances, pupils' enjoyment and gusto shone out. Around the school, there are many photographs that capture pupils' success in school musical productions.

- This confidence also shows in pupils' general conduct, demeanour and friendliness. Pupils of all ages are remarkably friendly and welcoming. During this inspection, I was greeted many times with cheery hellos, polite offers of assistance and inquisitiveness about how the inspection was going. Pupils are clearly at ease with adults and one another. They readily engage in pleasant conversation and report that unkind behaviour rarely happens. The school's motto of 'kind hands, kind feet, kind words' is clearly understood at Oak Meadow Primary.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- Continue to strengthen the quality of teaching in mathematics, especially in key stage 2, so that it:
 - builds progressively on what pupils understand and can do
 - enables pupils to make the best possible progress in the time available.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. 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 and the deputy headteacher, who is also the acting headteacher on Mondays and Fridays and will be the substantive full-time headteacher from September 2016, following your retirement from headship. I also met with school administrative staff and the home-school liaison officer. I carried out short observations of teaching in most classes, attended a school assembly and looked at pupils' work. I met with a group of governors and had a meeting with a

representative of the local authority. I talked with pupils in lessons, in the playground and in the dining hall. In addition, I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and received letters from a parent and a governor.

By the end of the inspection, there were 36 recent responses and 20 written comments on Parent View. I took account of these and the results of the school's own recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views. I looked at a number of documents, including pupils' progress information, the school's own evaluation of its performance, information about the work of the governing body, records of leaders' 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 and parents about safeguarding matters.