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6 October 2016

Miss Maxine Charles  
Headteacher  
Hall Green Junior School  
Stratford Road  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Miss Charles

### **Short inspection of Hall Green Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 December 2011.

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

You have ensured that standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have remained high since the school was last inspected. This has been achieved in the context of overseeing significant changes in senior leadership, including moving from a joint to a single headteacher. You have successfully overseen a high turnover of teaching staff. As you have integrated new teaching staff into the school you have maintained the good quality of teaching as more experienced staff have moved on. In addition, you have ensured stability and a calm ethos during the school's transition from a three-form to a four-form entry, which has necessitated significant changes to the structure of the building as the school has accommodated increasingly larger numbers.

You have risen to the challenges faced by the school with relish. By putting the interests of the children first you have ensured that they continue to receive a good standard of education. According to one parent, reflecting the views of others, 'Great school, great team of teachers and headteacher, all with one mission for the children: learning to be the best.'

Pupils join the school already working at a high standard achieved at the neighbouring infant school. You and your staff make sure that pupils do not rest on their laurels but instead continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics during their time in school. This ensures that standards are further above the national average by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6.

Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, do very well overall in their attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2, particularly in mathematics and reading, so that by the time they leave they are doing better than other pupils nationally. This is a consequence of high-quality teaching underpinned by focused support and high aspirations for all pupils to achieve highly.

As a result:

- pupils are well equipped for the next challenge of key stage 3 in secondary school
- the proportion of pupils making expected progress from key stage 1 to 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, as is the proportion of those making more than expected progress in reading and mathematics
- most-able pupils are fluent readers and respond well to high aspirations and expectations from home and school as well as a rich curriculum and wide range of additional activities
- attendance is above average; persistent absence is low for pupils, including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- there have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions for some time, as incidents of misbehaviour are very rare.

The last inspection report commended you and the previous joint headteacher for your continuous drive to unearth innovative methods for promoting pupils' learning. You have maintained and developed this in partnership with other senior leaders.

At the last inspection, inspectors noted that the school should provide more opportunities for pupils to participate in the life of the school and improve engagement with parents. Responses from parents and children spoken to confirm that you have achieved this with considerable success.

The very large majority of pupils spoken to demonstrated that the school is living up to its aim to equip every child with the skills to be a successful learner and responsible citizen. In addition to the academic skills they have acquired through the new curriculum, they know about democracy, rights and responsibilities and ensure that younger pupils are looked after well in school.

Most parents' responses to Parent Freetext were overwhelmingly positive and in particular praised you and the school's other leaders for its curriculum, additional clubs and activities and the commitment of the teaching staff.

You have recognised in your accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development that teaching is good but not yet outstanding. The proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress in writing and those currently in

school working at greater depth in writing, including those who are disadvantaged, is not as high as it is in reading and mathematics. Governors are very supportive but do not always hold you and other senior leaders to account rigorously enough.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and other senior leaders make sure that there is a culture of safeguarding promoted throughout the school by ensuring that the needs and interests of the pupils always come first. Any issues that have occurred have been followed up promptly and thoroughly to ensure that no child is at risk. Staff are encouraged to be vigilant and raise their concerns. Pupils enjoy coming to school and overwhelmingly feel safe and secure. They are very well informed on internet safety and know what to do in potentially risky situations.

Arrangements for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are thorough. Designated leaders and other staff are well trained and up to date with the latest information and guidance. Governors know their duties and are putting in place arrangements for a 'keeping children safe' committee to oversee the school's work in safeguarding. Governors have not always been sufficiently consistent in challenging leaders on whether they are fulfilling their responsibilities.

### **Inspection findings**

- Since your appointment as sole headteacher after the last inspection, you have strengthened the new senior leadership team, enabling leaders to take on enhanced responsibilities.
- New teaching staff are trained very well and where additional support is required this is very effective in bringing about improvements. You know the strengths and areas for development in teaching in depth.
- You have responded well to a new curriculum and assessment procedures. You have put in place detailed tracking systems to identify any individuals who may be at risk of falling behind so that support can be put in place in a timely way.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, are making very good progress in reading and mathematics.
- Other groups of pupils in school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from key stages 1 and 2, including boys, pupils for whom English is an additional language, other minority ethnic pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Standards have been maintained at key stage 2 and remain above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the most recent unvalidated tests and assessments the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics, reading and writing were high. The proportion reaching a high standard in reading and mathematics was also high but not as high for pupils working at a greater depth in writing.
- The proportions of pupils who made at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics from key stage 1 to 2 in 2015 were above average. The

proportion of pupils exceeding expected rates of progress was also high in reading and mathematics.

- Work seen in pupils' books at the end of the summer term 2016 indicates that pupils currently in school are also on track to achieve high outcomes. The new curriculum is ensuring that pupils have opportunities to extend their writing skills in a wide range of other subjects.
- Governors are highly committed to the school and provide strong support to its leaders. They know the school's strengths well but occasionally put too much faith and trust in the information provided by the headteacher and other leaders.
- Persistent absence has fallen rapidly over the last three years and is now well below the national average.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has continued to fall and in the last academic year there were none. There have been no permanent exclusions for several years.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and reported incidents are rare.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching is outstanding so that the proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, working at a greater depth within the expected standard in writing, is as high as it is in reading and mathematics.
- governors consistently hold senior leaders to account for fulfilling their safeguarding duties.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you and your deputy headteacher as well as other members of staff, including the special educational needs coordinator and business manager. I met the chair of the governing body and a representative from the Birmingham Education Partnership. I took part in a learning walk with you, visiting parts of five literacy lessons, and conducted a scrutiny of pupils' books with the

deputy headteacher. I also observed pupils as they moved around the school. I met with 12 pupils from Years 3 to 6, hearing some of them read and speaking to others about their views of the school. There were 17 responses to Parent Freetext but no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I considered the school's analysis of recent pupil performance and evaluated other records, including those concerning keeping pupils safe.