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Mrs Rehana Yasmeen  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Yasmeen

### **Short inspection of Leigh Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 November 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2010.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The partnership between you and the executive headteacher is highly effective and provides strong and effective leadership. You have both been involved in establishing a clear direction for the school. Your collective belief that all pupils should succeed in all aspects of school life is shared by all members of staff and, as a result, pupils achieve well as they move through the school.

Since the school converted to become an academy in January 2014, the executive headteacher has taken on a strategic leadership role at Leigh Primary School and the two other local primary schools that are now part of the Leigh Trust. However, she still has a deep knowledge and understanding of the specific needs of the pupils at the school and is very much at the heart of the work to continue to further improve the school. Your role as headteacher, which you took up when the school opened as an academy, allows you to focus on the day-to-day leadership and management of the school. You and the executive headteacher have a clear understanding of the particular needs of the pupils who attend the school and recognise the challenges that they, and their families, face. However, you adopt a no-excuses approach and have high aspirations for the pupils.

In 2011, the executive headteacher was identified as a national leader of education and the school became a national support school. This has subsequently involved

the executive headteacher, and other staff from the Leigh Primary School, providing advice and support to several local schools on how they can bring about improvements in leadership and management, and teaching and learning.

You, and the executive headteacher, have created a strong and efficient leadership team within the school. Senior leaders are proud of the opportunities that they have to improve provision within their specific areas of responsibility and work tirelessly with you and the executive headteacher to ensure that teaching and learning are effective in improving outcomes for pupils.

You, together with other school leaders, have been successful in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection of the predecessor school. You have ensured that there are more opportunities for pupils to write independently as part of their English work and have improved attendance by ensuring that parents do not take their children out of school for extended periods of time. Pupils are now provided with a good range of opportunities to apply their punctuation, grammar and spelling skills in extended, independent pieces of writing across a range of subjects. You have adopted a zero-tolerance approach to parents wishing to take their children out of school for holidays during term time and, as a result, attendance has improved and is broadly in line with the national average.

Pupils have a clear understanding of the expectations that you and the executive headteacher have set for behaviour and strive to meet and exceed these standards. Pupils behave well in school and recognise that their actions can impact on others. Pupils are polite, well mannered and proud of their school.

The majority of children start in the early years provision with skills and knowledge below those that are typical for their age. As a result of effective teaching that is accurately matched to their needs and abilities, they make strong progress and are well prepared for when they start Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school, including disadvantaged pupils. However, the most able pupils are not consistently set work that is sufficiently challenging and this limits the opportunities for them to work at greater depth and achieve the highest outcomes.

Parents are extremely positive about the work that you and all members of staff do with their children. You have established effective means of communication with parents that keep them well informed about their children's progress and well-being. The overwhelming majority of the high number of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey were extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work. All the parents who responded felt that their children were well looked after and feel safe in school.

You have established an effective curriculum that provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to develop their learning across all subjects. However, you are not complacent and recognise that the curriculum can be improved further and have clear and well-thought-out plans to achieve these improvements.

While the teaching of early reading through phonics is effective, the opportunities for pupils to develop secure comprehension skills are not as firmly in place. You and other leaders recognise this and are already starting to take action to address this aspect of teaching and learning. As yet, it is too early to evaluate how effective this action has been.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the executive headteacher regard the safeguarding of pupils as of the highest priority. As a result, there is a palpable sense of collective responsibility across all staff to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. All staff who work on the school site, including those not directly employed by the school, have a clear understanding of the school policies and processes for safeguarding pupils. A member of the school's leadership team has overall responsibility for safeguarding and undertakes this role diligently and effectively. She has ensured that all staff are well trained, with regular updates on relevant aspects of this area of the school's work. Staff understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from the threat of extremism and radicalisation. Systems for appointing staff are thorough and follow current government guidelines and requirements. All new staff, as part of their induction process, are well briefed on how to be alert for signs that pupils may not be safe, and the processes to follow to report any concerns. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They recognise the risks that use of the internet could pose and know about the need for secure passwords and know not to give out information to strangers. Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and are confident that all staff would deal with it swiftly and effectively if it were to occur.

### **Inspection findings**

- The strong and incisive leadership that the executive headteacher and headteacher provide has helped to ensure that teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection of the predecessor school. Where teaching is seen to be less effective, teachers are provided with support and advice on how they can improve their work with pupils. Swift and decisive action is taken if this does not have an impact on pupils' outcomes. All members of the school's leadership team are regularly and actively involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- There is a good range of monitoring and evaluation, including regular observations of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of pupils' outcomes. Leaders evaluate the impact of actions taken and are proactive in identifying strong and effective practice in other schools and identifying how it can be implemented at Leigh Primary School.
- The half-termly pupil performance meetings are used well to monitor pupils' progress and to hold teachers to account for the pupils that they teach. Outcomes for different groups are checked to ensure that where there is an indication of pupils falling behind, rapid interventions can be undertaken. Provisional assessment information for 2016 indicates that outcomes for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average.
- Leaders are aware that while disadvantaged pupils in 2016 made good progress,

their attainment was still below that of other pupils nationally. They have used additional pupil premium funding to introduce an additional class this year to enable older pupils to have more individual teacher attention.

- Members of the multi-academy trust and local governing body are aware of the school's strengths and priorities. They make good use of the information that they receive from the headteacher about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' outcomes. They recognise the need to regularly review all aspects of their work, including ensuring that the school's website meets statutory requirements.
- The school has a very high proportion of pupils from a range of ethnic minority groups, including a growing number of pupils who join the school from other countries, speaking little or no English. The increasing number of newly arrived pupils are well supported. Staff ensure that they fully understand the behaviour expectations and follow school rules. As a result, pupils quickly understand the need to take turns and listen to others.
- Pupils are encouraged and supported to develop spoken English from when they first arrive in school. Teachers and teaching assistants model language well and ask questions that require and enable pupils to reply in sentences.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They understand about the need for tolerance and respect and display this in their attitudes towards each other. They have very good opportunities to take responsibility through the school council, the Young Person's Parliament and through support for a wide range of charities. Pupils during the inspection spoke eloquently about the school's recent work on the European referendum and understood about world politics, including the American election.
- There is a strong and effective culture in this school of showing respect and understanding for other people's cultures and faiths. Pupils are taught about the beliefs of a wide range of faiths and speak positively about their visits to other places of worship, including a Sikh gurdwara, a Hindu temple, a Christian church and a Jewish synagogue.
- The teaching of early reading in school is effective. Teachers and other staff use a systematic approach to teaching phonics that is introduced from Nursery and followed through in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Teaching is matched to pupils' abilities and good opportunities are created for pupils to apply their phonic knowledge in writing activities.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening have improved over the past three years and in 2015 were above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard fell in 2016. However, this was a result in a large part of a number of pupils arriving late in the school year who had not previously been at school in this country and for whom English was an additional and new language.
- There is effective teaching of reading in place in the majority of classes but this is not fully consistent. Where reading for understanding is taught well, teachers make learning interesting and relevant to the pupils. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils read a short passage about space exploration. The teacher skilfully

drew out key vocabulary and unfamiliar words such as 'tourist', and asked searching questions of pupils, adapting them to the different abilities within the class.

- Opportunities for pupils to read for pleasure and enjoyment are promoted well. Older pupils appreciate and make good use of the opportunity to read at lunchtime in the well-resourced library.
- School leaders have rightly identified that the previous approach for supporting pupils in applying their reading skills to comprehension activities was not as effective as it could have been. They have therefore, this term, introduced a revised approach with a greater focus on extending pupils' skills in inference and developing their vocabulary. This is correctly identified as of great value to the large number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This approach is not, however, fully embedded as yet.
- School leaders have rightly identified improving outcomes for the most able pupils as a priority this academic year. While tasks are generally set in lessons that are matched to different abilities, the activities set by teachers for the most able pupils are not always sufficiently demanding.
- There has been an increased focus on providing opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in problem-solving activities using reasoning, and this is evident in work seen in books. Pupils in Year 5 used calculation knowledge to good effect in a range of problems that required them to think deeply and to consider different approaches to their work.
- The already well-thought-through curriculum is currently being further adapted to extend opportunities for application of learning across subjects. Trips and visits are used well to engage pupils in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 visited Weston Park as part of their studies of World War 2 and linked this to their reading of the book 'Goodnight Mister Tom'.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they embed and extend systems for pupils to apply their reading skills in activities that develop their depth of understanding of what they have read
- teachers set tasks for the most able pupils that are sufficiently challenging and that deepen their learning
- all policies and statutory information are kept up to date on the school website.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Hewett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the executive headteacher of the school, the deputy headteacher and four members of the school's leadership team. I also met with a member of the local governing body and with the chair of the multi-academy trust. I also considered the 204 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and looked at free text comments from parents. I visited, together with the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher, five classes to observe learning. I listened to some pupils read. I also spoke with pupils in lessons and on the playground.

I scrutinised information about pupils' progress during the last academic year. I considered other documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies and checks on staff employed in the school, and checked the school website. I also analysed the range of views expressed by staff through Ofsted's questionnaire about the school and its leadership. I reviewed the views expressed by pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaire.

During this inspection I focused on a number of key lines of enquiry. These included:

- how effective the teaching of reading is across the school and what the impact is on improving outcomes in reading for pupils
- how school leaders ensure that teachers' expectations for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are sufficiently high and that the work set for these pupils is sufficiently challenging
- how effectively leaders and managers within the school monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and use their findings to improve outcomes for pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils
- how the school supports minority ethnic pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and newly arrived pupils, and successfully prepares all pupils for life in modern Britain.