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Miss Kate House  
Executive Headteacher  
The Isleys Primary School  
Church Hill  
Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG20 7LP

Dear Miss House

### **Short inspection of The Isleys Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 2017, 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 September 2011

#### **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 leadership at Isleys Primary School that ensures the school goes from strength to strength. You have a clear understanding of what the school does well and you set a clear vision for what could be even better. You have the highest aspirations for all the pupils in your small rural school. You have the full support of your staff and work tirelessly with your governors and senior leaders to enhance the school's effectiveness. Together, you provide rich and varied learning opportunities that ensure that pupils are well placed to achieve their very best.

Pupils say they learn well at Isleys Primary School 'because it is friendly, and everyone gets along'. They like that at breaktimes older children play with the younger children. They find the many trips you provide interesting and stimulating, and enjoy learning across the different curriculum topics. Pupils state that Isleys is a caring school where they always have someone to turn to if they need help. Even though pupils were unanimous that bullying does not occur, those selected as 'anti-bullying ambassadors' are rightly proud of their role. Your dedication to Isleys ensures that pupils are enthusiastic and effective learners. As one parent said, 'Isleys Primary School strikes the perfect balance of maximising children's attainment and creating a memorable and rewarding childhood'.

Following your last inspection, you swiftly addressed those areas which inspectors

asked you to improve. There is clear evidence in lessons and in pupils' books that challenge is appropriately high in both mathematics and English. You have addressed pupils' ability to spell appropriately and this is reflected in both their written work and their typically strong achievements in end-of-key-stage-2 national assessments. Pupils learn well in the early years and most achieve a good level of development.

Leaders are aware that occasionally teachers' explanations in mathematics are not precise enough. As a result, they ensure that appropriate training and development is in place to refine mathematics teaching. Leaders are also developing ways to track and monitor pupils' growing skills across the broader curriculum, though this work is still in its early stages and so not yet fully having the impact intended.

Current pupils are achieving well. Across a range of subjects, including phonics, reading, writing and mathematics, the progress they make is typically good and some achieve better than expected for their age. Most-able pupils typically make good progress from their high starting points. Disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the additional care to achieve well. You track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics carefully to ensure that any pupil who needs to catch up is provided with tailored support to make appropriate progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that all systems to keep pupils safe are robust. Records are typically detailed, accurate and of a high quality. Leaders, including governors, are suitably trained in safer recruitment practises. When employing new staff all appropriate background checks are made and recorded efficiently.

You provide regular, up-to-date safeguarding training for all staff. Policies are reviewed frequently to ensure that they reflect any changes to statutory regulations. You take appropriate steps to keep staff informed of any new safeguarding information. As a result, staff know how to keep children safe from harm.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. You provide appropriate opportunities for them to learn about keeping safe online, 'stranger-danger' and road safety. Pupils state that they find the safety assemblies from your local police community support officer informative and useful.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, we agreed to focus on three main areas of learning at Ilsleys Primary School. The first was how leaders ensure that pupils achieve well in reading, particularly in key stage 1 but also across the school. We also looked at how well all pupils achieve in mathematics. The final area we addressed was how leaders ensure that pupils make effective progress in a range of subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics, and how the broad curriculum ensures that pupils are ready for the next steps in their education.

- You place a great importance on developing pupils' reading skills. In the early years and key stage 1, phonics is taught well. You ensure that as pupils progress they are exposed to a rich variety of texts. This includes children's newspapers, and high-quality fiction and non-fiction books. In key stage 2, most-able pupils read challenging material by critically renowned children's authors. Pupils' progress is typically rapid because you ensure that teaching is effective and children read regularly.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the close attention they need to make good progress in reading. Where appropriate, you provide daily opportunities for them to read to an adult. Extra teaching tailored to pupils' individual needs is also provided. For example, the small group of pupils I saw being helped with their phonics were making particularly good progress. Consequently, pupils who need to catch up achieve well from their starting points because additional support is readily available and of a typically high standard.
- Pupils generally achieve well in mathematics. Teachers usually provide an effective level of challenge in lessons which ensures that pupils regularly grapple with more difficult problems. For example, in Year 5 and 6 pupils were learning how to rotate and translate 2D shapes across a quadrant. In Year 2, 3 and 4 pupils were discovering the different nets of a 3D cube. Occasionally however, teachers' explanations in mathematics are unclear. When this occurs, pupils may develop misconceptions, or misunderstand what is being taught.
- Teachers are creative in developing pupils' mathematical skills. For example, pupils worked outside recently to calculate the perimeter and area of the playground accurately. Years 2, 3 and 4 investigated the properties of 3D shapes by constructing models carefully from art-straws. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn about mathematics because activities are imaginative and inspiring.
- The wider curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to learn and achieve well. You enrich learning across a range of topics and different subjects with many well-chosen educational visits. For example, Years 2, 3 and 4 recently visited the Ashmolean Museum to support their learning about history and the ancient Greeks. The subsequent work they completed in building a life-sized sarcophagus was particularly impressive.
- Across the school, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects. This is because the broad and balanced curriculum is planned well. That said, leaders do not yet consider pupils' progress in these areas effectively. Leaders are rightly addressing this to make certain that pupils' good learning is promoted effectively in all subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. Pupils talked confidently about their knowledge of different religions. They shared what they had learned from visiting different places of worship. Pupils develop a keen sense of tolerance because you expose them to the diversity of life beyond the school's immediate vicinity.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to develop their skills, particularly to provide accurate and precise explanations in mathematics
- pupils' good learning is promoted well in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I observed learning across the early years and key stages 1 and 2 jointly with the executive headteacher. I spoke to pupils, and looked at work in their exercise books. Meetings were held with senior leaders and four members of the governing body. I also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority. I took into account 29 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 24 written comments, and one email. I also analysed eight responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. A range of documents was reviewed, including: the school's development plan, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's single central record of checks made on staff, information about pupils' achievement, the local authority's reports, and records concerning pupils' attendance.