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Mr William Heptinstall  
Headteacher  
Coppice Primary School  
Shawhurst Lane  
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Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B47 5JN

Dear Mr Heptinstall

### **Short inspection of Coppice Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 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 your school was judged to be good in September 2012.

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

You and other leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have built well on the school's many strengths and have taken effective action to deal with weaknesses.

The school is a warm and welcoming place. The school's ethos is one in which everyone is expected to do well and where individual talents are nurtured. You have achieved a good balance between promoting pupils' academic achievements and supporting their personal development and well-being. Staff live up to the school's aims of making sure that pupils are 'happy, confident and prepared for life'. Since the school was last inspected, the results of tests and assessments at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently above average. Pupils who spoke to me during the inspection were invariably polite, mature and sensible. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

You make sure to pay attention to pupils' mental well-being and self-esteem. Several parents mentioned the 'Thrive' programme, saying how valuable it is to those who attend. The wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum well. The many trophies in the entrance hall are testament to the school's successes in sports and other activities. Pupils typically excel at gymnastics. Everyone is rightly proud that the Coppice's gymnasts are national champions.

Several parents who spoke to me and many who commented when completing the

online survey (Parent View) mentioned that you and the deputy headteacher are approachable. They are happy to see you both in the playground every morning. More than this, they are confident that should they raise an issue or a concern it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. One parent commented, 'The school is very supportive and I feel listened to whenever I have any issues.'

You place a high degree of importance on the professional development of teachers and support staff. You and the staff work closely and frequently with other schools, sharing knowledge and expertise and verifying teachers' assessment judgements. You also offer support to other schools, should they need it. You are open to suggestion and change. There is no sense of complacency or lack of drive for improvement.

You also believe strongly in accountability. You and other senior leaders are held closely to account by members of the governing body. Shared meetings between governors and the senior leadership team have enhanced transparency and improved the professional relationships between all parties. Teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils through regular meetings at which the performance of individuals is discussed. Arrangements for the performance management of teachers are well established and robust.

Leaders and governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and aspects that require attention. Self-evaluation is carried out carefully and with attention to detail. For example, every aspect of the school's inspection dashboard has been analysed and explanations sought in the light of the information. The school's plan for improvement reflects the areas of relative weakness highlighted in the self-evaluation. It is closely focused on the things that will help the school to continue to move forwards.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to take steps to make sure that pupils' progress in key stage 1 matches that of older pupils. You were also asked to focus on the use of data to improve teaching and learning. These two matters have been dealt with successfully. Over the past four years, younger pupils, overall, have built well on their prior attainment. Where there have been variations in outcomes these were due to issues within the cohort, not to weaknesses in teaching. You have implemented a comprehensive system for the collection and analysis of information about pupils' attainment and progress. You use it effectively both as a means of highlighting trends and looking at the performance of different groups, and for supporting teachers to make sure the needs of their pupils are met.

During the inspection, I drew your attention to some information that was missing from the school's website. In addition, the policy for equality of opportunity does not reflect the Department for Education's guidance on how to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. You realise that it needs to be amended in order to show how the school is complying with the public sector equality duty and to state the school's equality objectives.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and other leaders have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school's records are detailed and of high quality. You have a comprehensive programme of training for staff that covers all aspects of safeguarding, including the risks associated with extremist views and child sexual exploitation. Where staff join the school part way through the year, they are required to complete online training verified by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. You regularly provide updates. All of this means that staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and the steps they should take, should they have a concern. They understand the need for vigilance and that they should report concerns, however small, because they contribute to the bigger picture.

Procedures for the recruitment of staff and for checking their suitability to work with children are robust. Safeguarding has a high profile on the governing body's agenda. The governing body regularly discusses current safeguarding issues and the school's response to them. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding carefully checks the school's policies and procedures to make sure they are being implemented consistently.

You and the deputy leader for safeguarding work closely with social workers and other outside agencies to ensure that individuals' needs are met. You do not hesitate to seek advice where necessary and are tenacious in ensuring that issues are followed through to resolution.

Staff and parents raised no concerns about pupils' safety. Your records show that bullying is a rare occurrence. I noticed that pupils had written to you and the deputy headteacher to thank you, saying, 'You keep us safe in school and you keep our school a bully free zone.' You teach pupils how to keep themselves safe and to be aware of risks, especially when using the internet.

## **Inspection findings**

- The school's results have been above average since the last inspection. However, the proportion of pupils who attain higher standards is typically in line with that seen nationally. One of the school's priorities is to increase the proportion of pupils who reach higher standards. To do this, you have been focusing carefully on the progress of those pupils who attain high standards at the age of seven to make sure that they fulfil their potential. You are also putting effort into boosting the progress of middle-attaining pupils. You aim to make sure that as many as possible make strong progress, deepening their knowledge and understanding so that they are working at greater depth by the age of 11. This is having some success. The proportions working at greater depth across the school are increasing.
- The pupils who spoke to me about their work in science showed a strong understanding of the topics they had been studying. They gave convincing explanations for the findings of their tests and investigations. Their work was

well-presented and clear. They were obviously enthused about the chances they have to work with real equipment in the science laboratory (the Phiz Lab) and some have aspirations to study science in future.

- You and the staff have been working on strengthening the teaching and learning of mathematics, in order to boost pupils' progress in the subject. It was clear during the inspection that the pupils are used to having to think and use their powers of reasoning. In all the classes we visited, pupils were grappling with problems. They persevered, even when the tasks were challenging. Teachers are vigilant and move pupils on to the next challenge as soon as they are ready – nobody has to wait for anyone else to finish. Pupils check their answers for themselves. Where pupils notice an incorrect answer, they immediately ask themselves why this has happened and set about identifying and correcting mistakes. This enhances their understanding.
- Pupils are now taught mathematics as a whole class. You have found that this has had a positive impact on the achievement of lower-attaining pupils as they aspire to do some of the work that their classmates are attempting. Equally, your assessments show that it does not hold back the high flyers. The school's mantra is 'no ceiling on attainment'. The move to whole-class teaching and the high degree of challenge have had a positive impact.
- We noticed some minor weaknesses during our visits to classrooms. Not all staff were taking full account of the school's agreed approach of 'concrete, pictorial, abstract' to support pupils to complete calculations. Some lower-attaining pupils struggled a little too much without practical apparatus to help them. In addition, not all teachers are fully au fait with the 'bar' method of solving problems.
- There is a clear, structured approach to the teaching of phonics and reading. The school's relatively lower outcomes at the end of Year 2 last year arose because of specific difficulties and barriers to learning experienced by individual pupils, rather than weaknesses in teaching. Outcomes are set to improve this year and to match the above-average standards seen in previous years. Pupils who read to me spoke enthusiastically about reading. They read with fluency and obvious enjoyment. They could explain clearly how they are taught to read and how the school's systems help them to make progress.
- The deputy headteacher, with the support of other staff and an education welfare officer, has worked relentlessly to boost the attendance of the small number of pupils who are absent too often. Overall attendance levels were above average last year but the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not match this. The attendance of pupils entitled to free school meals was also lower. Current figures show that the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with that of other pupils and is no longer a concern. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has improved, but not so strongly. You have worked tirelessly to try to establish positive relationships with families of Gypsy/Roma heritage, targeting pupil premium funding at providing practical support and incentives such as laptop computers. You have also employed and drawn on the expertise of an attendance officer from the local authority's Gypsy/Roma/Traveller services. While there have been some successes, there have also been setbacks. You and

the deputy headteacher are committed to continuing to do all you can to work with Gypsy/Roma families to encourage pupils to come to school and to be sure that they are safe.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's website complies with the guidance from the Department for Education about what academies should publish online
- the school's policy for equality of opportunity is updated in order to show how the school complies with the public sector equality duty, and to make clear the school's equality objectives
- further support and training is provided for the teaching of mathematics, in order to ensure consistency in using and applying the school's agreed approaches.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation, your current priorities and to agree the areas of focus for the inspection. I discussed the school's approach to safeguarding with you and the deputy safeguarding lead. I met three members of staff who have responsibility for the teaching of phonics and reading. I also met with the chair and four other governors.

I visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning in mathematics, talking informally with pupils about their work and looking at their books. I met four pupils from Year 2 who spoke to me about how they are taught to read and I listened to them reading. I also met six pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 who told me about what they had been studying in science. I scrutinised the school's record of recruitment and vetting checks and other documents relating to safeguarding. I looked at the range of displays in corridors and around the school. I examined documents, including the school's plan for improvement, assessment information, and information on the school's website. I spoke to parents in the playground at the start of the day and took account of the 160 responses made by parents to the Parent View survey, including free-text comments. I also examined the views of 26 members of staff who completed online questionnaires.