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Mr Scott Connell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Connell

### **Short inspection of Sudley Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 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 the school was judged to be good in February 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and your team are driven and highly motivated to make a difference to pupils' outcomes and life chances. You set high expectations. It is clear that you are all passionate and committed, and that morale is high. Relationships between staff, and between staff and pupils, are positive, warm and friendly. Governors and the local authority officer describe you as a 'strong leader'. Governors know where there are strengths and where you are still working to improve, and hold you and your leadership team to account, challenging you and supporting you appropriately. Pupils receive a rich and varied curriculum. The day of the inspection fell in 'Health Week', with all groups of pupils involved in a sporting activity or learning to make healthy food, for example healthy pizzas. Pupils behave very well and have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. One pupil said, 'Teaching is very good; they like to keep us studying.' Pupils also say that teachers are 'kind' and that it is a 'caring school'.

The school was asked in February 2013 to raise pupils' achievement in reading and writing, to improve the quality of teaching and to make leaders' use of assessment information more effective, especially in relation to writing.

During my visit, it was very clear that leaders check more carefully on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for all groups of pupils. Writing, overall, is now a strength of the school. Leaders and teachers have a detailed knowledge of

the progress and attainment of all groups of pupils as a result of improved use of assessment information. Current information shows pupils are indeed making strong progress. This was clearly demonstrated in pupils' writing in subjects such as science and religious education (RE), and in their topic 'World Book', the quality of which was as good as their writing in English. However, the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not the same throughout the school, with current progress information showing that lower key stage 2 pupils are not achieving as well as upper key stage 2 pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders and governors place the highest priority on safeguarding pupils. Robust systems are rigorously implemented and adhered to by staff, irrespective of their role. Safeguarding documents, records, processes and procedures are fit for purpose and successfully implemented. Staff and governors receive high-quality safeguarding training to keep them informed of all types of risk to pupils. This training enables staff to quickly spot concerns and take rapid action with confidence.

You work closely with a range of agencies and draw on their professional expertise to ensure that pupils are kept safe. There is a strong culture of safety and security within the school. The large majority of parents speak positively about the school, are confident that their children are kept safe and would recommend the school to prospective parents.

Pupils say they feel safe and are happy to come to a school where they are looked after so well. Pupils spoken to during the inspection say incidents of bullying never happen, they can share any concerns they may have with a trusted adult and they are confident that any disputes are quickly resolved. They know about the potential risks and dangers when using electronic equipment and playing games, and know how to respond if contacted by a person unknown to them.

### **Inspection findings**

- In this inspection, I focused my time on four different aspects, including safeguarding. First, I investigated why writing outcomes were different in 2016 compared to 2015 and previous years, and what impact the curriculum was having on writing outcomes. You have been successful in your drive to improve standards in writing as a result of the decline in 2016. This has been achieved by improvements in the quality of teaching, partly as a result of increased training in school and as part of wider collaborative learning with other schools. Improved moderation practices and sharply focused pupils' progress consultations have also had a positive impact on improving the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils now write at length within different subjects, for example in science and RE, and work in books confirms they are making strong progress over time.

- Second, my focus was to investigate the acceleration of pupils' progress, relative to their starting points in Year 3. Pupils start Sudley Junior School having achieved well above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. I investigated why the published data for pupils in key stage 2 indicates that pupils did not make the progress they should have from the end of key stage 1, particularly in writing. Despite the published assessment information on pupils' progress, there is clear evidence that most pupils make good progress across key stage 2. This is especially true for those pupils in Years 5 and 6, who make stronger progress than their younger peers.
- Finally, I investigated how effectively leaders spend the pupil premium funding to improve the attendance of, and writing outcomes for, disadvantaged pupils. You have used part of the pupil premium funding wisely to invest in strategies and resources to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, overall attendance has risen slightly and the number of pupils who are regularly absent has lowered for the disadvantaged group of pupils. Current information shows that attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils are higher than the national average and persistent absenteeism is now below the national figure for disadvantaged pupils. However, you are aware that the incidents of absenteeism, including persistent absence, are higher among disadvantaged pupils than non-disadvantaged pupils but that the difference is diminishing.
- The school's current progress information confirms that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are achieving well overall in reading, writing and mathematics. The information shows that, for only one cohort, reading and mathematics are not as strong as they could be. For disadvantaged pupils, writing is a strength and these pupils are on track to exceed the national expectation in writing. In terms of progress, evidence seen during my visit indicates that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress over time in their writing, with no discernable difference in the quality of their writing when comparing outcomes, for example between their science, RE and English books.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to improve progress and attendance have a greater impact on the disadvantaged pupils
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in lower key stage 2 continues to improve so that pupils make stronger progress and a greater proportion achieve age-related expectations.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daley  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and your three assistant headteachers. We talked about the improvements which have been made since the last inspection. Together, we visited English and mathematics lessons as part of our learning walk through the school. I also held discussions with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, talked with pupils and had a conversation with a school improvement officer from the local authority. A wide range of documentation was looked at, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and information relating to pupils' current achievement and progress. I also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information. I took account of the 123 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and considered additional comments received from parents.