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25 September 2017

Ms Mandie Haywood  
Headteacher  
Old Park Primary School  
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Telford  
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Dear Mrs Haywood

### **Short inspection of Old Park Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 2017 with Kathryn Hanson, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2012.

#### **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 inspirational leadership and are passionate about providing the best possible education so that pupils have the opportunity to achieve their best. Along with the senior leadership team, you have developed a collaborative and ambitious team spirit throughout the school. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes have been improving since the last inspection.

You have continued to make sure that all members of staff put pupils' welfare and their personal development at the heart of the school's work. You and your governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and, as a result, you are taking effective action to improve the school further. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of the school. They agree that the school has a culture that is aspirational for all pupils and is well led and managed.

Pupils experience a rich curriculum. They all learn to perform, sing and play an orchestral instrument. The school takes every opportunity to introduce all pupils to and involve them in a wide variety of musical activities and events. These contribute significantly to their personal and social development. This develops their social skills very well as they gain an understanding of the importance of collaboration and discipline to achieve a high-quality performance. There are five main school orchestras and an after-school orchestra, which has recently performed with the

Hallé Orchestra at the Stoke-on-Trent Victoria Hall.

Pupils thrive in the caring, nurturing environment. Pupils' well-being is paramount. Pupils benefit considerably from a large range of therapies, which are provided by both staff and outside agencies. Staff ensure that pupils have access to a range of sensory activities whenever required. This particularly helps those pupils who need to become calmer before they can learn. Parents were universally delighted with how well the school looks after their children. One parent expressed the views of many when they said: 'There is nothing the school wouldn't do to help. My child comes out of school happy, smiling and singing.'

The early years team have considerable enthusiasm and passion. They have made changes to the indoor and outdoor environment to meet the needs of children better. As a result of effective leadership and teaching, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen for the past three years. The early years team have paid particular attention to supporting children's speech and language needs.

You and your subject leaders have addressed the areas identified for improvement from the previous inspection. You identified the need to improve teaching so as to raise standards higher and for pupils to work out things for themselves. This clear focus on high-quality teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement across the school. Leaders have strengthened the teaching of phonics. Pupils with different abilities read fluently and with understanding to the inspector. They used their phonics skills well to pronounce unfamiliar words accurately and could answer questions about key characters confidently. The most able pupils, including the disadvantaged most able, are typically presented with work that requires them to think carefully about their learning and demonstrate their mastery of both mathematics and the English language.

Leaders and governors have evaluated the effectiveness of the school accurately. The findings in the inspection were closely aligned to your own reviews of teaching and learning. You acknowledge that further work is required in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in different subjects.

### **Safeguarding is effective**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The headteacher has ensured that all staff and governors have read and acted upon the latest guidance on keeping children safe, including the dangers of child sexual exploitation.

Leaders work effectively with other agencies, including the local authority and social care services, when they have identified pupils who may be at risk. The school places mental well-being as an important element for pupils to be able to achieve. The school invests in services that promote positive attitudes to emotional health. These result in high-quality support plans that ensure that pupils develop effective

coping strategies, remain in school and are ready to learn. Responses from parents to school surveys indicate that they are confident that the school keeps their children safe. The school helps parents and carers understand the importance of adopting safe practices, such as using the internet safely.

### **Inspection findings**

- Work in books and the school's tracking of pupils' performance show that from their starting points, across key stages 1 and 2, most pupils are making good progress and reaching the expected standard or better than expected standard for their age.
- In the 2017 test results, Year 6 pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. In writing, their progress was similar to others nationally but it was not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- The results from the Year 1 phonics screening check show that pupils make a good start in understanding the sounds that letters make, often from low starting points. Pupils read widely and often across subjects to a high standard, with fluency and comprehension often beyond their chronological age. Younger pupils are able to identify the key features of a story. Older pupils have favourite authors, such as Michael Morpurgo and Jill Murphy.
- A successful focus on the teaching of mathematics has accelerated pupils' progress rapidly in this subject. Pupils have a good understanding of mathematical operations and apply them well in solving practical problems.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing skills well. Pupils develop the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar. They are able to write for a range of purposes and audiences effectively. However, pupils do not have enough chances to practise their skills in long pieces of written work across other subjects.
- Pupils make rapid progress in other subjects, in addition to English and mathematics. The study of famous musicians and artists inspires pupils to appreciate different types of art and music, develop skills in these subjects and produce their own compositions. In history, pupils learn about the cultures and historical events in different countries. In science, pupils understand the need for a fair test, make sensible predictions, measure accurately and draw appropriate conclusions.
- The school's nurture groups are highly effective in dealing with pupils who have emotional, social or behavioural difficulties. Through the school's support and guidance, the behaviour of these pupils has improved over time, reducing the barriers to learning that these pupils might face and ensuring that they make good progress.
- Leaders and staff work hard to improve the attendance of all pupils and of individual groups of pupils. They carefully track attendance and constantly review strategies in this area to ensure that they are as effective as possible. The attendance of most pupils is average. However, the low attendance of some disadvantaged pupils, who had very challenging circumstances and intense individual needs, had a negative impact on the school's overall attendance.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given more experience of writing at length and in different subjects so that they become more confident writers
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improved so that they benefit from the education at the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Nelson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you. We visited lessons with senior leaders and jointly scrutinised pupils' work. I spoke with the chair of the governing body on the telephone. We talked to some parents as they brought their children to school and at the end of the school day. We considered the 108 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and looked at free-text comments from parents. Inspectors listened to some pupils read and also spoke with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. We looked at a number of documents, including: information about pupils' achievement; your school self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; attendance and behaviour records; examples of school records about the care and protection of pupils; and other documents relating to safeguarding.