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Mrs Jinnie Payne and Mrs Belinda Taylor  
Headteachers  
Churchtown Primary School  
St Cuthbert's Road  
Churchtown  
Southport  
Merseyside  
PR9 7NN

Dear Mrs Payne and Mrs Taylor

### **Short inspection of Churchtown Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2017 with Nusret Ellahi, Her Majesty's 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 May 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as the joint headteachers of the school, your cohesive vision for improvement has brought consistency to the quality of teaching and learning. In recent years, almost all measures of school effectiveness have improved.

Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. The relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Where learning is most effective, there is an infectious buzz of productivity and engagement. Pupils say that 'Lessons are challenging. There is a nice balance of work and fun.' The school's culture is caring and ambitious. Typically, parents see the school as one that encourages pupils to 'keep a healthy mind-set while achieving their best'.

The previous inspection report asked the school to improve the level of challenge for pupils in their written work. Teachers now ask pupils to share what they know about their topics before learning begins to make sure that they do not cover old ground. Staff skilfully question pupils about their work to explain their thinking and deepen their understanding. Pupils act well on the feedback that they receive to improve their work. This has resulted in improved rates of progress in writing at the end of key stage 2.

The second area for improvement from the previous inspection was to extend pupils' range of vocabulary. You have effectively promoted pupils' language skills by sourcing quality texts that introduce increasingly complex and stimulating vocabulary. As part of

the inspection we agreed that this success needs to be translated into improving disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics. Governors agree that they need to question, in greater depth, the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to help leaders to achieve this.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They understand the dangers of the internet and know how to keep safe online. The vast majority of parents responding to Parent View agree that their child is safe at school. This is also reflected in the staff survey. You have created a culture of care and vigilance and are committed to ensuring that pupils feel safe, both physically and emotionally. Staff have received comprehensive training and are clear about what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. They understand their responsibilities well. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed that the first line of enquiry for this inspection was to look at how effectively leaders support disadvantaged pupils in writing and mathematics. You have a clear strategy in place. Your focused efforts to use quality texts and structured speech is having a positive effect on pupils' progress in writing. This is improving towards the national average by the end of key stage 2. In mathematics, however, disadvantaged pupils' progress remains low, despite improvements for other pupil groups. Governors are aware of the additional barriers to achievement for some pupils. However, they do not question the impact of the funding in enough depth to be able to analyse the reasons why disadvantaged pupils' progress lags behind that of others in mathematics. The work in pupils' books shows that the pitch of work and expectations for these pupils vary. Tasks are not consistently matched to pupils' next steps in learning to enable them to make rapid progress. This is particularly evident for the most able disadvantaged pupils. Where learning is most effective, pupils are supported well by adults who structure and deepen their understanding through effective questioning. This is particularly effective in the early years.
- The second area that we looked at was how effectively staff provide support for pupils' social, emotional and mental health. You have placed this high on the school's agenda. Proficient and dedicated middle leaders coordinate this area of the school's provision. Pupils say that there is a lot of support for their emotional needs. For example, they like the opportunities to have friends join them inside during playtimes to avoid the bustling playground. Pupils act as well-being champions to raise awareness of mental health issues for other pupils and to help build resilience in their everyday lives. Staff identify vulnerable pupils and middle leaders provide training to reinforce this vigilance. There is additional support for young carers, adopted pupils and pupils who have recently suffered bereavement. This includes special trips and residential visits to provide an outlet for pupils to overcome their anxieties and to take part in experiences that would otherwise be difficult for them to access. Pupils who have benefited from this support appear engaged in their

learning and their attendance is high. Leaders are improving pupils' outcomes, not only academically but for their personal and social well-being. The skilful way in which staff link pupils' personal development with physical education has been recognised in the prestigious award of sports school of the year. Staff track pupils' progress by focusing on their feelings of self-worth and confidence, which are improving. Staff at your school work closely with secondary schools to make sure that there is a smooth transition to the next stage of their education. They offer follow up support once pupils leave. It is credit to your staff that few access this as they make a smooth transition into the next phase of their education.

- Finally, we agreed to look at how effectively leaders use professional development to improve teaching and learning in the school. All staff benefit from a tailored programme of development that aligns with leaders' plans for school improvement. Teachers who are at the early stages of their careers have a mentor and they say that they are guided well. Staff access training which includes coaching each other and observing their peers. You also use consultants to provide bespoke support to help staff to improve their practice. This results in a continual dialogue among the staff about the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders feel that they have ownership of their subjects and they lead with vigour. Staff also receive support to develop their leadership skills by shadowing senior leaders. The vast majority of staff responding to the survey agree that leaders encourage, challenge and support teachers' improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors question in greater detail the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in mathematics
- there is consistency in accurately matching work to pupils' abilities, particularly that of the most able disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you and governors to discuss safeguarding and aspects of school leadership and management. Inspectors visited classes to observe teaching and learning and analysed pupils' writing and mathematics work

from other classes. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during lessons about their work and with a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils about their experiences at the school. Inspectors heard pupils read individually, as well as hearing pupils read as part of their classroom activities. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff and reviewed safeguarding arrangements. Inspectors also reviewed documentation which included the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. The lead inspector took into account 181 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 49 responses to the staff survey.