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14 November 2017

Mr Michael Forber
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Forber

Short inspection of Somerville Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in January 2016, you evaluated the school's work and prioritised key areas for improvement. In February 2016, Somerville Primary School federated with a local nursery school. You are now the executive headteacher of both schools. Teachers and other staff work with their colleagues in the private Nursery classes at Somerville Primary School and in the federated Nursery school to check the accuracy of the assessments that they have made of children's progress and to share best practice.

The school is an inclusive and caring place. The school's motto, 'Aiming high together', threads through everything. You are an effective leader who has developed a culture of high expectations. You have a clear vision for the school and want pupils to develop respect and resilience.

You have your finger on the pulse of the school. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. You have worked hard with staff and governors to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils make good progress in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They behave very well in lessons and during breaktimes. Relationships between staff and pupils, and among pupils, are very strong. Pupils say that they enjoy school. As one pupil said: 'Teachers are nice and

they respect you. It's a friendly place and I like all the challenges in English and mathematics.' Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as football and netball. Regular trips, residential visits and visiting authors stimulate pupils' interest.

You and your team have improved the learning environment. Classrooms are vibrant and exciting places to learn. Staff are proud to work in the school and feel well supported. One teacher commented: 'Working in a large team is fabulous. It enables us to share good practice and make the school better for pupils.' Teachers appreciate the professional development that they receive. Middle leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility.

Governors are experienced and passionate about the school. One governor commented, 'We want pupils to be happy, safe and valued as individuals.' Governors know the school well. They visit the school regularly to check that initiatives are making a positive difference to pupils' outcomes. Governors use their skills to provide effective challenge and support. The local authority provided effective support for you when you took up the post of headteacher.

Children in the early years make good progress. The proportion achieving a good level of development has been above the national figure for the last three years.

You have addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers use the school's marking and feedback policy consistently. As a result of a whole-school focus on reading, writing and mathematics, there has been strong improvement in pupils' progress in key stage 2, as indicated by the provisional end of key stage test results for 2017. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is in line with the national average. The unvalidated overall progress score for mathematics is above the national average score and represents a significant improvement on last year. You have worked with teachers to ensure that they plan learning in such a way that all pupils, including the small number of most-able pupils, are challenged well. A higher proportion of girls now reach the expected standard in writing by the end of key stage 2. However, you are aware that more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, need to achieve greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2.

The vast majority of parents who spoke to the inspector, and those who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive about the school and feel that their children are safe. One parent commented: 'It's a fantastic school. You can't fault it. The school is well run and teachers are very approachable.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders promote a culture of safety and vigilance. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. The systems for recruiting new staff and their induction are rigorous. All staff receive regular training. They have read the most up-to-date national guidance on 'Keeping children safe in education'. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a

pupil's welfare or safety. Safeguarding referrals are made in a timely manner and concerns followed up appropriately. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to protect any pupils who might be at risk. Governors are actively involved in ensuring that procedures are effective. The new entry system at the school gate has tightened safety for children. Pupils say that they feel safe and are well looked after in school. They report that bullying is rare. Pupils know whom they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- My main line of enquiry for this inspection related to the pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2. This had been an area for improvement since the previous inspection. Leaders have introduced a range of initiatives which have strengthened pupils' progress. Teachers have developed a sharper focus on guided reading. Staff work effectively with small groups of pupils to meet their individual needs. Teachers also ensure that pupils have access to a range of good-quality texts that support pupils' ideas and imagination in readiness for writing. Teachers use 'hooks' to capture pupils' imagination and provide them with the opportunity to write for a purpose across different subjects. Teachers' assessment is accurate. Teachers within the school and across the local authority check to make sure that this is the case.
- You have provided effective training for teachers that has had a positive impact on pupils' mathematical reasoning. Teachers provide effective support for pupils to develop their understanding of numbers and calculations. Leaders closely check on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers provide extra support for those pupils who may have fallen behind. My review of your data, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that they are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, you acknowledge that too few pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reach greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2.
- Over recent years, too many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, have not attended school regularly. You have introduced a range of strategies to monitor and improve attendance. These are starting to have a positive impact. Leaders make good use of the school's education welfare officer to support families. Pupils who arrive in school on time receive a raffle ticket and prizes are awarded frequently. Attendance for some pupils is improving, including for those who are persistently absent. However, current information shows that while overall attendance has improved, it remains below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- In 2017, the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was not as good as it should be in reading and writing in key stage 2. You have put in place strategies to address this. The special educational needs coordinator now works full time and regularly checks the performance of teaching assistants. They are well deployed to provide effective support for pupils. Current assessment information shows that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now make good progress in key stage 2. However, you

recognise that these pupils still need to reach higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve greater depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2
- pupils' attendance improves, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the standards that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities reach in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 improve further.

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

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the office manager, social inclusion manager and a group of middle leaders. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I met formally with eight pupils from key stage 2 and spoke with other pupils during breaktimes. I visited a number of classes where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. I scrutinised pupils' work across the school. Parents talked with me as they dropped their children off at school. In addition, I took account of 244 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 11 free-text responses. I also considered the views of 39 staff and seven pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaires. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies about keeping children safe, records of training, safeguarding checks, and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.