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Miss Blackmore  
Headteacher  
Ryders Green Primary School  
Claypit Lane  
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West Midlands  
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Dear Miss Blackmore

### **Short inspection of Ryders Green Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 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. You provide calm but decisive leadership, which motivates and challenges all staff to provide stimulating learning experiences for all pupils. You say that positivity is central to the school ethos. You and your staff create this positive atmosphere through a strong focus on collaboration, dialogue and mutual respect. Learning experiences encourage interaction between pupils, which enables them to learn from one another.

Classrooms are attractive places for learning. Children's work is celebrated around the school. The newly refurbished library is highly organised and provides a very pleasant informal environment for pupils. The appointment of a librarian has ensured that excellent use is made of this space.

Since the last inspection, you have worked to strengthen teaching so that pupils are given sufficient guidance on how to extend their learning and challenge themselves. You have introduced schemes such as the Children's University to raise self-esteem and aspiration. Pupils know they can achieve and are keen to rise to the high expectations you and your staff hold. One visitor to the school spoke of the improvements that have been made to the school and she said, 'it lifts my heart to come to the school now'.

Teachers are now less inclined to interrupt pupils' concentration by giving additional instructions. This was an area for development in the last inspection. Classroom

activities are purposeful and pupils work hard to achieve set tasks. Pupils and staff take great pride in the work that is produced. Evidence in books demonstrates consistently well-presented work. The resources that are created by teachers to stimulate or support planned learning are equally of exceptional quality. A great deal of attention is paid to this, which shows the dedication and commitment of your staff.

The governing body is knowledgeable about the school, because it is kept well informed by leaders. Governors do hold senior leaders to account for the impact of their work to effect improvements. Minutes from governors' meetings demonstrate their ability to ask searching and challenging questions of senior leaders. They also ensure that leaders are supported and their efforts are appreciated.

Governors manage the finance and resources that are available to the school efficiently, ensuring that expenditure is used well to promote learning.

Since the last inspection, you have refined the school's means of planning for future development. These plans have clear measures to show how the school will judge the success of planned developments. Your clear and accurate understanding of the school's areas for development enables you to focus in the right places. The school's development plan identifies the most important priorities and many new initiatives and strategies have been put in place to address these issues. You are still focusing on improving boys' literacy skills. In addition, you are working to improve the attendance and breaktime behaviour of a few pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are appropriately detailed. Staff are checked carefully before taking up employment to confirm that they are suitable to work with children. All the adults who work with children are well trained and understand the risks pupils might face. They are vigilant and know what to do if they have concerns about a child. Pupils told me that they were confident that they could share any worries with their teachers and they know they would receive help and support. You have ensured that they know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when they are using the internet. There is a strong culture of safeguarding and pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school. As a result, pupils say they feel safe in school and are well looked after.

### **Inspection findings**

- You were rightly concerned about the dip in standards in reading. You have been quick to address this. The profile of reading has been raised across the school. This is not only evident in the displays around the school, but also in the approach to the teaching of reading. There are now rigorous systems to ensure that pupils are reading books that are at the right level. Many books have been purchased. The pupils I spoke to were particularly interested in the graphic novels, which they found exciting and stimulating. Teachers in parallel classes

plan together for guided reading sessions. Pupils talked to me about their use of an online resource which enabled them to access many texts both at home and at school.

- Leadership of English is a strength of the school. Training has been provided to staff to enable them to improve reading comprehension skills. A resource has been purchased that focuses on the explicit teaching and modelling of specific reading skills. Another resource develops vocabulary and retrieval skills.
- Ensuring the accuracy of assessment has been a recent focus. There are now comprehensive and rigorous processes in place.
- As a consequence of all the actions taken, standards in reading across the school have substantially improved.
- During this inspection, I focused on the impact of the school's work to improve attendance. Staff are diligent in tackling poor attendance. There are thorough systems in place to closely monitor individual pupils' attendance. Leaders and other staff keep seeking ways of engaging with parents, particularly those families who are the hardest to convince that frequent attendance is essential. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has dramatically improved over the past year.
- We decided that the social and emotional development of pupils would be an appropriate focus within the inspection as it is an aspect of the school's work that is of paramount importance to you all. The school is highly effective in supporting vulnerable pupils and pupils who present challenging behaviour. There are key people within the school who work to support such pupils. These members of staff are highly skilled and have established true connections with these pupils that are based on mutual respect and trust. Over time, the need for external support to help the school manage extreme behaviour has reduced substantially. Pupils report that there is very little, if any, bullying. However, they do say that some pupils use inappropriate language at times. Leaders are aware of this and believe it needs greater attention in order to eradicate it completely.
- We discussed the apparent difference in achievement between boys and girls in the younger classes. It is evident that by the time pupils are ready to leave the school to attend high school, that gap has completely diminished. However, in the younger classes, boys consistently underperform in reading and writing.
- My discussions with pupils, parents and staff revealed that they are happy with the school's work. Pupils say they like coming to school. Staff morale is also high. One member of staff said, 'Everyone enjoys their job and wants to do the most they can do for the children.'

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- further actions are taken to seek ways of working with parents who are not making sure that their children's attendance is as good as it can be
- the provision for boys is improved in the early years and key stage 1 so that their achievement in reading and writing is in line with that of girls
- incidents of low-level poor behaviour are further reduced, particularly during breaktimes and lunchtimes.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Davies  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other members of school staff and members of the governing body. I also spoke to a local authority adviser. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. We jointly visited classes in the school to observe pupils' learning, speak with them and look in their books. I looked at an extensive range of current books from each year group. I also spoke with pupils at breaktime and during the day. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of the governors, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. I also scrutinised and discussed the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.