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Mrs Helen Webb
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Dear Mrs Webb

Short inspection of Colwall CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Along with other school leaders, you have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. However, since the last inspection the school has been through a very challenging period. There have been changes in leadership and a staffing restructure has taken place. The school has also been housed in temporary accommodation for over three years. Nevertheless, you and your staff have done everything possible to minimise the disruption to pupils' education and you have created a positive and happy learning environment. Pupils make good progress and they enjoy learning.

You have secured the confidence of governors, staff, parents and pupils alike. Those spoken to agree that you are determined to provide the very best education for all your pupils. Staff who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire all enjoy working at the school and are proud to be part of the school community. The great majority of parents are supportive, describing the strong progress that their children make and the commitment to pupils' well-being shown by you and your team. Almost all parents would recommend the school to others. As one parent wrote: 'The school has a caring family ethos. It provides a safe, positive and happy environment that inspires learning and friendships.' Many parents also commented on how well everyone has managed the challenges of the current temporary accommodation and the excitement over the eagerly anticipated move to the new school site in January 2018.

Pupils spoke positively about school. Relationships between pupils and adults are

strong. Pupils generally behave well and they say that the school's behaviour policy is applied fairly. Across the school, pupils have opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, such as school council representatives. Older pupils can apply for school-wide roles, such as 'directors' (four pupils with similar roles to those of head boy or girl), house captains and 'sports crew'. Pupils are proud of their contribution to school life and these opportunities help to prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to secure the good quality of teaching so that pupils' achieve well in English and mathematics. You have addressed this by ensuring that there is consistency in the approaches to teaching across the school. As a result, there is a high level of pupil engagement in lessons and a balance of adult-supported and independent activities. Teachers provide 'stretch' opportunities for the most able pupils on a regular basis. Outcomes for pupils are in line with those seen nationally and the most able pupils generally achieve well. However, some pupils who are of average ability are not doing as well as they could and this is an area for improvement. Similarly, you are aware of the need to improve further the progress made by the small number of disadvantaged pupils within school.

The school was also asked to develop the role of subject leaders. You have developed your team so that subject leaders regularly review planning and provide training for staff to strengthen the quality of teaching across all areas of the curriculum. However, while English, mathematics and science leaders have a good understanding of the progress pupils are making in their subjects, this is not the case across all subjects.

You, your leadership team and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvements. These are accurately reflected in your evaluation of the school and the identification of priorities for development. However, the school's plan to address these priorities is not focused enough. It contains many additional priorities and, therefore, you are trying to address too many aspects at once. As a result, this dilutes the impact of your work. You agree that this aspect of planning needs to be revised.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding within the school. You have created a safeguarding team that ensures that the school is a safe environment for pupils. Following an external review, actions have been taken to tighten up procedures and safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils are well cared for at all times and they know that the adults in school are there to look after them. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that they are taught how to stay safe, for example when using the internet or crossing the road. You have adapted breaktime and lunchtime routines to help pupils make the best use of the limited playground space and to minimise any risks to pupils' safety.

All staff understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe from harm. As a governor said: 'Everyone is part of a network to keep children safe.' Staff are clear

about what they should do if they have any safeguarding concerns. You work effectively with external agencies to follow up any matters about pupils' welfare. Governors understand their role in overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of school safeguarding procedures.

Inspection findings

- Across the school, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and this enthusiasm for learning is passed on to the pupils. Classrooms are welcoming and positive places to be. Teachers plan topics and lessons to engage pupils' interests. Regular staff training helps teachers to plan effectively. Staff are aware of the need to ensure that activities match the needs of different groups of pupils and most pupils are making good progress. A focus on ensuring appropriate provision for the most able pupils is having a positive impact across the school. Ensuring that more pupils who are of average ability make good progress is an area for development.
- The quality of phonics teaching has improved over the last two years and the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has increased. Almost all pupils now reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2. Pupils use their phonic skills to help develop fluency in reading. Across the school, there is a focus on improving pupils' reading comprehension skills. This is supporting pupils' work in many other subjects.
- As a school, you are focusing on improving outcomes in writing. While these are not yet as strong as you would like them to be, more pupils are working at the standard expected for their age and rates of progress are improving. Teachers provide clear examples to support pupils' writing and pupils have regular opportunities to write for an audience or a specific purpose. For example, Year 6 wrote a letter to the local council highlighting the dangers on nearby roads. Whenever practical, teachers use the context of class topics to help engage pupils in their writing. For instance, Year 2 pupils wrote a newspaper article about Amelia Earhart as part of their topic on transport.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics is proving effective in developing pupils' confidence and supporting their mathematical understanding. There is a focus on developing pupils' basic skills before providing opportunities, at a range of levels, for them to apply these skills through problem-solving activities. The lesson structure enables teachers to give immediate feedback to pupils. Additional support, for pupils who require it, is provided in a timely way with the aim of helping pupils to 'keep up' rather than having to 'catch up'.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is based on the national curriculum. You and relevant subject leaders have recently reviewed the content of history and geography-based topics. In science, there has been an increased focus on practical activities. It is too soon to say what impact these developments will have on pupils' outcomes. You regularly track and assess pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, you do not currently have information about how well pupils are developing knowledge, skills and

understanding within other subjects. This is an area for future development.

- Pupils benefit from being able to access a wide range of trips, visitors and extra-curricular activities, all of which help to bring the curriculum to life.
- The progress of some disadvantaged pupils within school is slower than that of other pupils. However, you closely track individual pupil's needs and provide additional, personalised support as required. This may include access to specific resources or support for social and emotional needs. You are aware that some approaches are more effective than others are and you are looking at ways to improve further rates of progress for these pupils.
- Provisional information for 2016/17 shows that pupils' attendance has improved and is likely to be above the national average. You are aware that the attendance of some vulnerable pupils is lower than that of other pupils. You carefully track this and work directly with parents when attendance drops below an acceptable level. The importance of attending regularly, and on time, has a high profile within school. The procedures you and your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence and working with external agencies, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide opportunities to maximise pupils' progress in English and mathematics, especially for those pupils who are of average ability and those who are disadvantaged
- the school improvement plan is more closely matched to the school's current priorities
- subject leaders have increased opportunities to evaluate pupils' progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, members of the senior leadership team and other members of staff. I met with six representatives of the governing body, including one of the joint chairs of governors, and I spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils, both formally and informally.

Together we visited all classes where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some books. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, improvement plans, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of 59 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 38 free-text responses and two emails sent directly to Ofsted. I also took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.