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14 December 2017

Mr Adam Farrington
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Dear Mr Farrington

Short inspection of Shifnal Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The needs of pupils are understood and learning is planned precisely so that current pupils make good rates of progress. Pupils' progress is checked rigorously so that leaders can analyse where staff are having the most impact and where further improvements can be made. School leaders are highly ambitious for pupils' pastoral and academic needs. As a result, pupils make good progress and leaders have ensured that they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. Leaders provide effective support and challenge to enable all staff and pupils to be successful. School leaders are well respected in the community because they have built a rapport based on trust and mutual respect. For example, some parents commented during the inspection that school leaders really cared about them and their children. Parents overwhelmingly stated that they felt that their children enjoyed school, felt safe and were well looked after by staff.

Leaders provide a strong steer for improvement, ensuring that actions reflect the specific needs of their pupils and community. The school has the best interests of the children at the forefront of all they do. As a result, the personal, social and emotional well-being of pupils is a strength of the school. Leaders have created an environment that promotes and celebrates learning, being an inclusive school where all are valued, cared for and supported. Governors are effective because they have a secure knowledge of the school, its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are very involved in gathering information for themselves about the effectiveness of the work of the school, for example by conducting regular visits to meet with leaders

and observe pupils' learning.

Pupils make good progress because adults use assessment information effectively to tailor learning to meet the specific needs of pupils providing the right level of challenge in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who are new arrivals have their needs assessed quickly by the school. This is because they have effective systems in place to identify pupils' levels of need and put in place appropriate strategies to support them. For example, the school's pastoral provision is used effectively to support pupils with specific social and emotional needs to develop the skills they need to be successful in their academic learning.

Pupils behave well in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. Pupils are eager to learn and settle quickly to their learning in lessons, because adults make the work interesting. Pupils have a love of reading and a number of children who talked passionately about the books they have read and their favourite authors articulated this. Pupils are proud of their work and the school regularly celebrates pupils' work in vibrant displays around the school and in assemblies.

Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that pupils made good or better progress, especially most-able pupils. Leaders have successfully ensured that most-able pupils' outcomes are at or above national averages across reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils now regularly access a range of computers and other devices to support them in their learning. Teachers provide regular feedback that helps pupils to edit their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. There is a strong culture of safeguarding that ensures that pupils flourish and learn in a safe and secure environment. Pupils' welfare is at the forefront of all that the school does. For example, effective action was taken to make sure that the school site was secure and safe for pupils during recent major building works. You and other leaders provide regular training for all staff that is appropriate for the needs of the school and its context. Adults spoken to during the inspection were clear about what they should do if they have any concerns about pupils' welfare. The governors and staff have a good understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the context of the school. Designated safeguarding leaders liaise effectively with external agencies in the best interests of pupils.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have developed a broad curriculum offer for pupils. Leaders have ensured that teachers have secure subject knowledge in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make good or better progress to achieve outcomes that are in line with or above national averages at the end of all phases. The English and mathematics curriculum is adapted well so all groups of pupils, including pupils entitled to the pupil premium, make at least

good progress. Some subjects are particularly noteworthy because of the high-quality teaching that pupils receive. For example, in physical education, pupils receive specialist coaching so that they develop their skills to a high standard because the subject is developed more thoroughly. However, this is not true for all curriculum subjects, and as a result some pupils do not work to the same standard as they do in literacy or numeracy. This is because adults sometimes limit pupils' outcomes, as tasks set are not challenging enough. Consequently, wider skills, knowledge and understanding across the breadth of the curriculum are not developed well enough. Therefore, pupils are not able to study aspects of the curriculum in depth.

- School leaders have ensured that the school's curriculum provides opportunities across a wide variety of subjects for pupils to write in different styles for different purposes. However, not enough pupils are writing to the same high standard as they do in their literacy books in other subjects across the curriculum. This is a result of adults setting tasks that lack sufficient challenge for pupils in some subjects other than English and mathematics. Mathematics is a strength of the school because leaders have established a systematic and consistent approach to developing arithmetic across the school. As a result, pupils in current cohorts make good progress. Pupils have effective strategies to support their calculation of number and readily available resources to support their work in shape, space and measures. Consequently, pupils' work in these elements of mathematics are strong. However, reasoning, logic and problem-solving are less well developed. As a result, pupils have limited opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- You have effective systems to ensure and promote good attendance. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about winning the 'Early Bird' award that you have established to promote good attendance. As a result, attendance has improved to near national averages. You have given attendance a high priority and committed time and resources to reduce absence rates among all groups successfully, particularly those who are persistently absent. Leaders challenge parents to promote the value of good attendance, and through your safeguarding procedures, in identifying patterns of poor attendance, you have successfully targeted and improved attendance. Through your effective positive behaviour strategy, you have ensured that pupils behave well, and the very small minority with challenging behaviour are well supported to improve. You have fostered a culture of trust and mutual respect where pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school during informal times. Pupils have good attitudes toward their learning and want to do well. As a result, lessons are productive, enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning. Exclusions have reduced significantly as a result of effective interventions and liaison with outside agencies to improve the behaviour of a very small number of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers expect pupils to apply their writing skills to the same standard as they do in English across the wider curriculum subjects
- teachers enable pupils to have opportunities to develop more deeply their skills, knowledge and understanding in wider curriculum subjects so that they make progress as good as or better than in literacy and numeracy
- teachers enable pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of reasoning, logic and problem-solving in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

John Demmerling
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and other members of the leadership team. I also met with a group of governors. I met with a representative from the local authority. You joined me on visits to classes. We looked at examples of pupils' work.

I talked to pupils about their work during visits to their classes and informally spoke to pupils around school at different times of the day. I reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation of its performance, the school development plan and documents relating to keeping pupils safe. We discussed the most recent information about pupils' achievement. I took account of 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke with parents at the end of the school day. I also looked at information published on the school's website.