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Miss Alison Taylor  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Taylor

### **Short inspection of Cherry Orchard 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.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in April 2015, you have led the school with energy and passion, feelings which are shared across your leadership team. This is recognised by pupils and parents alike. You, other leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve. This is because systems to check the quality of learning, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and other aspects of the school's work are robust and accurate. You strengthen this further through regular evaluations from other local good and outstanding schools. As a result, changes are made quickly to address any shortcomings.

The school is a calm and nurturing environment where staff help pupils to develop well, academically and personally. Without doubt, pupils enjoy being at the school and they enjoy learning. They are courteous, well mannered, behave impeccably at all times and have good relationships with teachers and other adults. The overwhelming majority of parents think that the school provides a very good standard of education. They particularly appreciate the caring ethos that allows their children to thrive. One parent captured this ethos by stating: 'This school is fantastic for my children. They look forward to school every day and are well looked after.'

Governors bring a range of skills and experiences to their roles and share the same

passion and determination to excel. They have a positive impact through the support, challenge and level of questioning they afford school leaders. Together, governors and leaders provide a strong sense of purpose and direction.

The school's accurate and thorough self-evaluation recognises strengths as well as areas identified for improvement, for example improving progress in boys' reading, particularly those in key stage 2, and encouraging the few pupils who lack confidence to write more independently. These views are supported by inspection findings.

You have successfully addressed the priorities identified in the previous inspection report. In particular, your focus on key stage 1 ensuring a smooth transition from the early years so that all children are now able to learn in a style well matched to their stage of development. As a consequence, there is now a suitable level of challenge for pupils of all abilities, including the most able pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding records are fit for purpose. Records are well maintained and of high quality. The single central record of recruitment checks and arrangements for ensuring that staff are suitable to work with children meet statutory requirements. The designated safeguarding lead has made sure that training for staff is up to date. Governors check safeguarding arrangements regularly. Referrals to the local authority and other agencies to report safeguarding concerns are closely monitored. The safeguarding team is experienced and knows the context of this school.

Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare, and teachers deal with them quickly. The pupils say that the school is a very friendly place, and those new to the school are made to feel welcome. They also say that the school is a safe place and they are able to talk to staff if they have concerns.

### **Inspection findings**

- A focus of the inspection was to establish whether the school has taken appropriate action following the 2017 key stage 2 results. These showed that pupils had made slower progress in reading and writing than in mathematics and followed a similar trend in 2016. However, the rapid action taken by school leaders indicates that the progress made by the vast majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, has reversed this trend. Work in pupils' books and our classroom observations during the inspection show that pupils are now making faster progress in reading and writing.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the current attainment of disadvantaged pupils in their classes and their next steps in learning. In lessons, teachers' expectations of all pupils are high and questions are often accurately targeted to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. As a result of these strategies, differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of others are reducing over time.

- Your checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress are accurate and reliable. Your work with other good and outstanding schools locally has helped you and the governors to pinpoint the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Through their reviews of the school's work, governors hold leaders to account for how well the school is meeting pupils' needs.
- Pupils said they understand that even if they find activities hard at the beginning of the lesson they will know more about what they are learning by the end. This is partly because pupils are becoming more resilient in their learning. Observations show that pupils work with positive attitudes, that they learn from making mistakes and that they help each other learn when needed.
- Although attainment continues to rise and many pupils are becoming very enthusiastic about their writing, a few are still not working independently enough and seek their teacher's approval before moving on. School staff had correctly noted this as an area of concern and have already taken appropriate actions to encourage pupils to write more independently, including providing success criteria that help pupils to check their own work.
- A further area that we agreed to look at was the impact of phonics teaching following a gradual three-year decline in outcomes. Many children enter Reception at the early stages of learning English and this has an impact on their understanding and development, particularly in reading and writing. However, classroom observations and scrutiny of current children's progress clearly demonstrated that your early years team is now ensuring that these children are gaining a solid grasp of basic skills. This means children make good progress as they move through the school.
- Finally, the progress of key stage 2 boys' reading in 2017, although stronger, was still below that of girls and followed a similar trend in 2016. Leaders have, therefore, identified this as an area for continued focus. The school has recently opened a new library to encourage pupils, particularly older boys, to read more widely. Classroom observations during the inspection indicated that the progress of boys' reading is starting to improve in line with that of the girls.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all groups of pupils continue to develop and further strengthen their ability to write more independently
- the focus on developing pupils' reading skills, particularly to accelerate progress of boys in key stage 2, is applied consistently across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Steven Cartlidge  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with groups of pupils, and five members of the governing body. I scrutinised school documents, including safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching. I visited all classrooms with you to speak with pupils, look at their books, observe their learning and to hear several pupils read. I examined safeguarding and child protection information. I took account of the 46 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and I also took account of the views of the 43 parents who texted or wrote to me.