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Mrs Joanne Quigley  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Quigley

### **Short inspection of Wollescote Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2018, 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 September 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You lead the school effectively and everyone shares your vision for continued improvement. Staff and governors echo your high aspirations for all pupils. Since the last inspection, several key staff have been promoted to roles in other schools. Temporary gaps in staffing led to a period of instability that had a negative impact on the pupils' progress. Standards in 2016 dipped below national levels. However, you have managed the high turnover of senior leaders successfully, and a strong team spirit is evident across the school. Staff feel valued and are committed fully to the pupils and school community. You encourage and actively develop leadership at all levels. New leaders are already having an impact. This shows in the improvements in assessment, reading and science that were evident during the inspection. These changes are enabling pupils to make faster progress.

Leaders know the school well and have a secure understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. The school's self-evaluation is honest, detailed and accurate. Evaluation is based on a rigorous review of the provision and the impact the school has had on pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Using this information, you have introduced termly raising attainment plans and tightened up the approach to monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress. The senior leadership team works successfully to embed this culture of achievement, and everyone is clear about the areas for improvement. There is a collective drive to improve outcomes for all pupils while retaining the love of

learning and enjoyment that is evident in every classroom.

You have ensured very effective and timely training to enable staff to implement with confidence new approaches to assessment and reading. Staff speak positively about the opportunities you provide to further develop their expertise, skills and knowledge. All staff contribute to the development of the curriculum. This ensures a consistent approach to all subjects. Subject leaders appreciate the opportunity to see their subject across the whole school. Planning in this way has developed well since the last inspection. A curriculum which interests the majority of pupils is in place. Staff morale is high. This is reflected in the positive views expressed in the questionnaires that members of staff completed and in discussions during the inspection.

Governors are committed, skilled and knowledgeable. They bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the school and offer a highly effective balance of support and challenge. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and the priorities for school improvement. When they come into school, they use the time well to check what is happening and consider the impact of actions that leaders have taken on pupils' progress and outcomes. Minutes of governors' meetings detail the range of questions they ask as they challenge leaders and hold them to account for pupils' outcomes. They are clear about the progress that has been made since the staffing changes and understand the reasons for the dip in standards. Governors used the staffing changes as a positive opportunity to reflect on and reshape the school's leadership structure. They are highly ambitious for all staff, pupils and the whole school community. Through their professionalism, they promote fairness and respect at every opportunity.

Pupils are polite and courteous and behave very well. They offer a warm welcome to visitors and pupils who are new to the school. Pupils have a good understanding of tolerance, and mutual respect is evident in the way they relate to one another. They enjoy coming to school and want to learn. They engage readily in their learning and work together effectively. Pupils who spoke to me unanimously agreed that they would not change anything about their school, as it is such a welcoming place to be.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. All parents who responded to the school's questionnaire and Ofsted's Parent View survey agreed unanimously that their children are happy, safe and making good progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders, including governors, ensure that the school meets its statutory duty to keep all children safe. High-quality, regular training for all staff ensures that they know how to keep children safe and what to do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders make thorough checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school and keep precise records of their actions. The school's safeguarding governor visits the school regularly to check these records and make sure that procedures have been followed diligently. A comprehensive induction plan helps new staff understand the high

focus given to safeguarding in this school. Policies and procedures are securely embedded, and referrals are made in a timely way. As a result, vulnerable children and families are supported effectively.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Teachers make sure that pupils develop their skills and understanding of e-safety and healthy lifestyles. Pupils know about different ways of protecting themselves when using the internet. For example, they talked about not publishing photographs or giving out their names and addresses to people online. Pupils told me that bullying is not a frequent occurrence at their school and expressed confidence that adults would deal with any incidents well.

## **Inspection findings**

- The first focus for this inspection was to review how effective leaders have been in improving the outcomes in reading for pupils across the school. Reading standards at the end of key stage 1 and 2 were lower than national figures in 2016 and 2017. Leaders identified reading as a key priority for the school following this dip in standards. You have analysed the reasons for these lower outcomes and have developed a specific reading curriculum for the school.
- This comprehensive approach to the teaching of reading is now being embedded across the school. A three-weekly cycle of daily reading lessons is helping pupils develop and practise specific reading skills. Staff and pupils embrace the approach that focuses on developing vocabulary, inference, prediction, evidence, retrieval and summarising. It is helping pupils develop the skills they need to be successful. The reading teaching cycle builds in specific time for one-to-one catch-up sessions. Pupils receive appropriate support when they need it and are not left behind. Pupils who are new to learning English receive intensive support to develop their understanding of phonics. They quickly develop the ability to use this understanding to work out unfamiliar words. They continue to receive support to develop their comprehension skills. Extra tuition led by skilled staff is also offered before and after school. This is leading to a rise in standards. Current data shows that most pupils are making better progress in reading than previously. Leaders expect outcomes to rise this year.
- Pupils read well and show good attitudes to reading. They apply their knowledge of phonics to read unfamiliar words. They talk confidently about the books they have read and can summarise the key points. Pupils are beginning to build a reading toolkit which they can use. The toolkit builds up a record of their skills in reading and acts as a reminder when they get stuck. Their reading journals are full of high-quality, thoughtful work. High-quality training in how to teach reading has played a key role in this drive to improve outcomes for pupils. You ensure that expertise in teaching reading is shared with all staff. They value this and feel more confident as a result. Good subject knowledge in the teaching of reading is evident.
- The second area of focus for the inspection was to look at the quality of teaching in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) and to check whether outcomes are improving for all children. Children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. Language, speech and communication skills are particularly

low.

- The children thrive in a well-organised, stimulating learning environment. Independence is fostered from the start and routines established. For example, when tidying up, children emptied out water containers and hung up their aprons before sitting on the carpet. Adults know what each child can do. Teaching is strong and care is of good quality. Adults adapt the learning activities to help children make good progress.
- Adults successfully create a culture in which children learn to share, enjoy each other's company and work well together. Adults encourage the children to persevere and not give up. They encourage children to talk. The impact of this is clear. During the inspection, I watched a group of children exploring how to order numbers. The boys and girls took turns and listened to each other as they worked out what comes after 16. Children can make themselves understood and explain what they want. The very youngest children can link two or three words to form simple phrases.
- As a result of a visit to another school, leaders and staff said that their expectations are higher this year. Current assessment information indicates that more children are on track to reach a good level of development. Children now have writing books and many are beginning to write simple phrases. They enjoy writing and know that other children and adults read their writing. A new handwriting scheme is beginning to help children develop skills to form their letters correctly.
- The third line of enquiry was to look at how well teaching meets the learning needs of boys. Boys did not perform as well as girls in most subjects in the last two years. Leaders rightly identified this as a key issue for the school. Leaders track progress in reading, writing and mathematics every half term. Progress data for the autumn term 2017 shows that most boys are now making faster progress. Some boys still lag behind girls. However, staff identify which boys need extra help. Support given before and after school is helping these boys to catch up.
- A different approach to writing, including handwriting, is engaging boys more effectively. It is more practical and gives them many opportunities to talk about their learning. Boys focus on their work and show high levels of concentration. The boys who spoke to the inspector talked about the topics they had studied. Boys enjoy the broad range of subjects that are included in each topic. They explained what they are learning in science and talked confidently about the work in their books. Boys in the EYFS used a counting strategy which helped them add 11 and 5 accurately. They were excited about their learning. Teachers provide homework that includes a choice of activities linked to each topic. Staff said that more boys complete homework now.
- My final line of enquiry was to check the impact of what leaders are doing to raise attendance. Leaders and governors have high expectations that pupils attend school every day. Policies are clear and systems are robust. Parents spoken to during the inspection said that they receive regular information about attendance. A parent commented, 'If they are not in school they cannot learn.' Leaders are tenacious in following up any absence from school. They make

referrals to external welfare agencies and issue fines. As a result, attendance has improved this year.

- Pupils who are away from school too often are usually visiting family abroad. Staff support these children when they return to school. Teachers check what the child has missed and help them catch up. Leaders do not authorise extended leave but expect parents to complete leave request forms. This ensures that leaders know where children are, whom they are staying with and when they will return to school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to embed and drive forward the improvements which are already having an impact on attainment in reading and in reducing the differences in attainment between boys and girls
- they continue with the robust approach to managing absence from school and build on the recent successes in improving attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Nicola Harwood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- I held discussions with you and other leaders about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement. We discussed information about pupils' current progress and attainment and talked about significant changes since the last inspection.
- I met with a group of four governors including the chair and vice chair. I also met with a group of teaching and non-teaching staff. I considered the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- I carried out learning walks and visits to classrooms with you and other senior leaders to look at the impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning and progress. During these visits, I spoke with pupils and discussed their work with them. I heard pupils from Years 2, 3 and 6 read and talked with them about their books and the reading skills they are developing.
- I talked to a group of pupils representing the Young Rotarians in your school to seek their views.

- I met with parents before school started and considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.
- I looked at a range of documents including: your school self-evaluation document and school development plan; your raising attainment plans; minutes of governing body meetings; procedures for safeguarding and for checking the suitability of staff to work with pupils; and leaders' monitoring of attendance data.