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Mrs Jenny Birchall  
Headteacher  
Oldswinford C of E Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Birchall

### **Short inspection of Oldswinford C of E Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 June 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, well supported by senior leaders, have maintained good academic standards. At the same time, all staff are committed to the school's clear focus on pupils' broader development, safety, happiness and well-being. The school's Christian ethos and community and global involvement contribute well to pupils' personal development. Your pupils are polite, courteous and confident.

You know the school well, including its strengths and weaknesses. Your plans to address areas that need to improve are detailed and appropriate. When you take action, improvement follows quickly, for example in the early years and in the teaching of mathematics.

Governors are very committed to the school. They also know the school well because you provide them with high-quality information and they visit regularly to check, first-hand, the accuracy of what they are told. They provide you with good support and strong challenge.

At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with ensuring that pupils are sufficiently challenged in all subjects and with improving achievement in mathematics. You have addressed these areas effectively. Expectations and levels of challenge are high across subjects. The teaching of mathematics has improved, although there is room for further improvement in some aspects.

Most parents and carers are positive about the school and the education it provides. Many who responded to Parent View praised the school's values and close community ethos. Others complimented teaching and the school's efforts to develop pupils in ways other than just academic. One parent spoke for many when they wrote:

'I really can't express strongly enough how happy we are with the experience our children are receiving. They are thriving and enjoying school immensely. I love the balance the school has between academic progress and well-being development and growing as an inquisitive and aspirational learner.'

However, several parents, through Parent View, expressed concerns especially about aspects of communication between school and home. These included concerns about the number and timeliness of emails from school and the information that parents receive about their children's progress during the year.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have been successful in ensuring that the school has a strong culture of safeguarding. All staff understand that keeping pupils safe is their top priority. They are well trained and consequently alert to any sign that a pupil might need help. Members of staff pass on any concerns they have, secure in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with speedily and appropriately. All staff who responded to their inspection questionnaire said they believe that pupils are safe in school, as did almost all parents who responded to Parent View.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Procedures to recruit staff safely are fully understood and used well. Child-protection records are detailed, very well organised and stored securely.

I spoke with many pupils during the inspection. All said that they feel safe in school. They told me that they have great confidence in their teachers and other adults in school to help them with any problems they have. They said that bullying is rare and that any that does happen is dealt with well. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet.

Governors play a full part in ensuring that safeguarding is effective. They are well trained and they regularly check, by talking to pupils and staff, that policy is being put into practice.

### **Inspection findings**

- The inspection's first focus area was the quality of mathematics teaching, especially in key stage 2. Although pupils make reasonable progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6, their progress lags behind that made in English. The appointment of a single mathematics lead last year has proved successful, as a consistent approach to mathematics teaching is now evident across the school, including in key stage 2. Teachers develop pupils' basic skills

well and they are increasingly expecting pupils to think deeply when solving problems, rather than repetitively applying a learned method.

For example, I observed pupils in Year 4 who had been learning about perimeters of shapes. They were trying to find a shape with a perimeter of 9cm. In doing so, they consolidated their previous learning while having to think hard about how to solve this problem. This deepened their understanding of the concept of perimeter.

- Pupils' ability to reason and explain their thinking when solving mathematical problems is less well developed than their fluency and problem-solving skills. Although they are sometimes asked to 'explain why', this practice is not routine or consistent across all teachers.
- The second area that I considered was the quality of provision in the early years foundation stage. Following disappointing outcomes in 2016, you made changes to the leadership of this area. This has proved highly successful, and outcomes rose considerably in 2017. Reception is well led and teaching, from teachers and teaching assistants, is strong. There is an appropriate blend of formal teaching and child-initiated activities well supported by adults. The classrooms and outdoor space are attractive and vibrant. Resources are plentiful and engaging. Children are happy, safe and enthusiastic learners who behave well and typically are engrossed in what they are doing. Adults regularly assess learning and use this information well to plan children's next steps.
- The next area that I considered was whether the school has high expectations of pupils, both academically and in other aspects. Expectations of pupils' attendance and behaviour are high. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is consistently above the national average for primary schools. In class and at social times, pupils behave very well. They are polite, articulate and keen to do their best. Teachers' expectations in lessons are high across years and subjects. For example, I observed pupils in Year 1 sorting materials and being expected to explain what they were, in a science lesson. In a topic lesson in Year 2, pupils were expected to spell and punctuate accurately. Pupils in Year 4 maturely considered and discussed chronology in history. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 tackled difficult fractions problems with resilience and enthusiasm.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics accelerates by regularly expecting them to reason and explain their thinking when solving problems
- seek the views of parents to:
  - understand any concerns they might have
  - take action, where appropriate, to address these concerns.

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

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and other members of your senior leadership team. I visited several classes during the day with senior leaders, where we observed teaching and learning and spoke with pupils about their work. I talked with many pupils in lessons and at breaktime. I met with seven governors including the chair of the governing body. I scrutinised several documents including your self-evaluation, reports provided for governing body meetings and safeguarding and child protection records. I talked with several parents as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. I considered 101 responses to Parent View, including 66 free-text comments and 24 responses from members of staff to a staff inspection questionnaire.