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Mr Chad Wilson
Head of School
Shortlanesend Community Primary School
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Dear Mr Wilson

Short inspection of Shortlanesend Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Yours is a school community where pupils are eager to learn and keen to achieve their very best. You are highly ambitious for all pupils and the community as a whole. Effective teamwork ensures that your settled staff and strong team of teaching assistants contribute to school improvement well. Your chosen approach to supporting pupils' learning is fully supported by all staff who immerse themselves in the topics being taught. Bright and vibrant school displays showcase the rich and varied curriculum you offer. Engaging activities maintain pupils' curiosity in learning, their outstanding behaviour, personal development and well-being.

You use the support from the trust well to ensure an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. You use the detailed information from monitoring and evaluation to set a clear direction and establish accurate priorities for improvement. Your personalised approach is used well alongside well-considered pastoral care processes to ensure that the academic and personal needs of pupils are met. Most parents and carers are fully supportive of your actions and share your ambitions for the school.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection in 2013. By the end of Year 6, standards in writing have risen so in 2017 a greater proportion of pupils exceeded the expected standard and greater depth when compared to national figures. Pupils' standards in other year groups currently in the school are also rising. For example, standards have

improved in Reception. Pupils use their good language skills and knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to write simple sentences in a wide range of imaginative situations. Your approach to ensuring that pupils write across the curriculum is also proving successful. Pupils' technical aspects of writing improve when they are challenged to describe what makes a desert in geography or explain how the water cycle works in science.

Safeguarding is effective.

All involved in the school community are committed to keeping pupils safe. You make sure all necessary checks are made to confirm that those who wish to work with children are suitable. Training for safeguarding and child protection is up to date, regular and welcomed, enabling staff and councillors to fully discharge their duties. Pupils and most parents are confident that issues are followed up. Pupils are knowledgeable about matters of safety through activities planned in the curriculum. For example, activities such as walking in the village are used well to reinforce aspects of road safety and help prepare pupils for trips to London, for example.

You ensure that staff are kept abreast of any updated matters relating to safeguarding through weekly meetings. In doing so, you draw well on the support and guidance provided from the trust and any findings from serious case reviews. Stories and morals taught support pupils' understanding of safeguarding issues well and supplement the information provided by a wide range of visitors and guest speakers. Overall, your highly detailed knowledge of the children in your care and their families, combined with your effective communication with a wide range of external agencies, ensures that your safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- During my visit, we agreed to focus on how well the most able pupils are being stretched and challenged to reach the highest standards in reading and mathematics. We also explored how effectively teaching is improving pupils' knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Finally, we looked at how well provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is meeting their needs.
- Your analysis of pupils' performance in mathematics, following the 2017 national tests, revealed that while pupils' attainment and progress were good, gaps in their knowledge and understanding of fractions were evident. This hindered their even better achievement. Support from the trust is developing teachers' subject knowledge well so that activities planned build on pupils' prior learning effectively. As a result, more pupils are on track to reach the higher standards, or 'greater depth', than previously.
- The curriculum in mathematics is ensuring that more of the most able pupils are being challenged in their learning. Pupils can confidently identify common misconceptions, fractions or irregular shapes and explain why eight divided by a half results in a larger answer. However, some older pupils still found it hard to directly point to work that fully stretched them or find examples of mathematical

formulae they had learned. They report having to do simple work first before the 'more interesting maths after'.

- Your accurate monitoring and evaluation have identified precise next steps in the development of mathematics at the school. You realise that activities planned could provide greater variation to improve pupils' fluency and understanding of mathematical concepts more; beyond becoming fluent in methods of calculation. Work in pupils' books shows there is also greater scope for extra focus on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. You have effective plans in place to address these issues.
- Children get off to a flying start with their reading in Reception. Effective teaching helps children to identify the individual sounds in words accurately. Children therefore become confident with what sounds different letter combinations make. Standards in the Year 1 phonics check have risen year on year and are now above the national average.
- Older pupils read accurately and with interest. They hold a good knowledge of authors and enjoy the school's approach to teaching reading through the use of high-quality fiction texts in lessons. Vivid classroom displays bring reading to life for pupils at the school. However, pupils' responses to questioning about texts demonstrate some lack awareness as to how inference and deduction can be used to identify deeper themes in books and texts.
- Pupils experience a wide variety of writing activities that promote their good knowledge and understanding of text structures, purpose and organisation. Theme curriculum weeks carefully link experiences of trips and visitors to a range of different writing tasks. Pupils therefore become well versed in applying their knowledge of different genres in subjects and contexts.
- At times, the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation is not followed up carefully enough through the teaching of writing. For example, older pupils study how to write using relative clauses, metaphors and personification. However, these techniques are not routinely insisted upon so that pupils' descriptive writing improves. In other instances, teaching does not help pupils understanding what impact the word, sentence or punctuation choices they make have on the reader.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are catered for very well at the school. The special educational needs coordinator has a detailed knowledge of pupils' academic and wider personal and pastoral needs. Carefully considered individual plans help ensure that pupils thrive both academically and in their confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Technology, imaginative use of resources and a very close liaison between the school and external agencies combine to meet the needs of these pupils well. Leaders are not afraid to give some honest messages that can at times be unpopular to parents, to ensure that their children's needs are fully met.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum in mathematics is developed so that pupils' fluency, reasoning and

problem solving improves further and challenges the most able

- the teaching of reading develops pupils' inference and deduction skills further
- teaching helps pupils improve their knowledge and understanding of the impact their word, sentence and punctuation choices have on the reader when writing.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Aspire Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the executive headteacher and your special needs coordinator. I met two councillors of the local hub council, who hold the responsibility of local governance for the school, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A discussion was held with the chief executive officer from Aspire Academy Trust. The views of parents were gathered through a typical number of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Visits to all classrooms were conducted jointly with you to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, to review the quality of pupils' work over time, and talk informally with them about their experiences of school. A range of documentary evidence was evaluated, including documents relating to safeguarding and governance. I met with two groups of older pupils to talk about their work.