

1 March 2018

Mr A Pearson  
Headteacher  
New Invention Junior School  
Cannock Road  
New Invention  
Willenhall  
West Midlands  
WV12 5SA

Dear Mr Pearson

### **Short inspection of New Invention Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 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.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the last inspection, you and your staff team have worked with energy and determination to secure improvements across the school. You are rightly very proud of the school's many strengths. You have developed the roles of others in the staff team, so that leadership responsibilities are shared. The staff team works together effectively, constantly striving for excellence, and staff are keen to do their very best for the pupils in their care. Staff appreciate the professional development and training they receive and they readily share their best practice with other schools.

The school is welcoming. Pupils' interests are stimulated by the exceptionally high-quality and immaculate learning environment. This reflects leaders' expectations of high standards and close attention to detail. Classrooms are calm, orderly and purposeful places, where pupils work hard and behave well. Presentation in all pupils' workbooks demonstrates their pride in their work. They enjoy coming to school and say that the teachers make learning interesting and fun. They enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively because they say they learn from each other. They show respect and courtesy towards others. Parents value the caring ethos of the school. One parent said: 'The positive professional relationship that both my

children have developed with their teachers has supported their learning and both of them are excited each morning to go to school. As a parent I couldn't wish for any more.'

Pupils are at the heart of everything the school does. There is a strong culture of ambition and aspiration for pupils, which inspires pupils to achieve their best and have high expectations of their future. This is reflected in the school's mission to 'teach and prepare each child today, for their tomorrow'. Learning experiences are created for pupils to reflect on future career opportunities. These have included visits to universities and visits from a range of adults who have talked about their careers. As a result, pupils are well informed about opportunities outside school and aspire to achieve in the wider world. One pupil said: 'Going to university inspired me to pursue my dreams.'

The curriculum provides a diverse range of learning experiences which enrich the whole child. Pupils and parents appreciate opportunities provided for pupils to engage in sports competitions and events, learn to play a musical instrument and participate in trips, including the 'unforgettable trip to Paris'.

Governors know the school well. They recognise the improvements you have implemented since the last inspection and believe the school's performance has been considerably strengthened in that time. They are ambitious for the school to improve even further. You and other leaders within the school provide the governing body with useful information about the school's effectiveness. This enables them to provide appropriate challenge and support.

You have taken effective action to deal with the areas identified in the previous inspection. The most able learners are now being provided with greater challenge in lessons. This is particularly evident in mathematics, where the most able pupils have made progress that is significantly better than the national average over the past three years. You have worked with all staff to ensure that teachers make effective use of teaching assistants. Teaching assistants receive planning and guidance prior to lessons so that their time is used purposefully as they work with pupils. There is greater clarity for teaching assistants in terms of their role and responsibilities. You have introduced new procedures to ensure that the progress of different pupils can be carefully monitored. Leaders are able to identify individual pupils and groups of pupils who are making slower progress, so that targeted intervention can be used to diminish the performance gap between those pupils and their peers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. The designated safeguarding lead has ensured that all current safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are fit for purpose. Records of pupils who are of concern are detailed and well organised. Concerns are followed up swiftly and there is a written chronology of actions taken.

All staff understand their responsibility in keeping pupils safe. They undertake

appropriate safeguarding training, which secures their knowledge of different types of abuse and the potential signs of abuse. Training records are carefully maintained, so that refresher training can be provided in a timely way. Safeguarding awareness is a priority within the school and staff are kept up to date through the circulation of regular safeguarding newsletter updates.

Parents and pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to use modern technology safely. Pupils consider bullying to be rare, but are confident that if they had problems staff would listen to them and deal effectively with any issues.

## **Inspection findings**

- You were right to be concerned about the dip in the progress pupils with middle prior attainment at key stage 1 made in mathematics in 2017. You have been swift to focus on improving the quality of mathematics teaching across the school. Leaders' analysis of the 2017 pupils' test papers revealed that the middle attaining group were held back by their lack of skills and confidence in using mathematical reasoning. This has led to key changes in the way mathematics is taught. Pupils are now routinely given opportunities to develop skills of reasoning. They are asked to explain and justify their thinking to others. Inspection evidence confirms your view that pupils are making better progress. However, these improvements still need to be built on and sustained to ensure an absolute consistency in the quality of teaching and learning for every child.
- I focused some of the inspection on the quality of writing across the school. Attainment in writing in 2016 and 2017 indicated that the percentage of boys achieving expected standards of writing and greater depth in writing was lower than the percentage of girls. You have worked to address this through the whole-school writing projects, which have been used to promote writing in a fun and inspiring way, for example the writing project which focused on Harry Potter. Pupils in Year 4 spoke to me enthusiastically about their work around the Harry Potter books. Inspection evidence shows that currently boys in all year groups are making progress which is at least in line with the progress of girls.
- I also found that pupils were given many opportunities to write extensively, including opportunities to write in the context of other subjects. However, pupils could be given more opportunities to articulate their thinking about the sentence structures and vocabulary they have chosen, by explaining those choices and the desired effect on the reader to teachers or each other.
- You identified attendance as a cause for concern and have put strategies in place to improve it. It is an aspect of school life that has been given a high profile. There are displays and rewards in place to celebrate good attendance. Staff are very active in their pursuit to tackle attendance that falls below an acceptable level. Individual pupils' attendance is closely monitored and poor attendance is challenged. There are some parents who do not agree with the school's focus on improving attendance. However, you and your staff have continually sought ways of engaging with those families who are the hardest to convince that frequent attendance is essential. As a result, there has been a dramatic improvement in

rates of attendance across the school and the percentage of pupils with persistent absence has also dropped significantly. It is now well below the national average.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is a continued focus on promoting deeper thinking skills of reasoning in English and mathematics
- further action is taken to seek ways of working with parents whose children's attendance is not as good as it could be.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Davies  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other members of school staff and members of the governing body. I also spoke to your local authority adviser. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. We jointly visited classes in the school to observe pupils' learning, speak with them and look at their books. I looked at an extensive range of current books from each year group and a sample of books retained from the last academic year. I also spoke with pupils at break and during the day. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of the governors, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. I also scrutinised and discussed the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.