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Mrs Yvonne Bennett-Gleig  
Headteacher  
Summerhill Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Bennett-Gleig

### **Short inspection of Summerhill Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders, staff and governors strive to ensure that the school's work makes a difference to every pupil. Their high expectations for pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are a tangible part of the school's ethos. Leaders and governors are equally committed to ensuring that the school plays a significant part in preparing pupils to become good citizens. The very positive comments from parents and carers show that they recognise these aspects as part of their children's daily experiences. Typical comments from parents reflected their view that the school is not just about academic results, but about supporting children socially and emotionally and providing them with worthwhile experiences.

You became the school's substantive headteacher in January this year, following the resignation of the previous headteacher. This has necessitated some changes to the organisation of other leadership roles, including subject leadership. You recognise that some staff will, therefore, need time to acquire new knowledge and skills. However, because you lead an established and experienced staff, these changes are not affecting the school's day-to-day business.

Since the school was last inspected, pupils' standards and progress in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly. Leaders and teachers have worked hard and successfully to accomplish this. Governors have played their part in challenging leaders to improve standards. Your staff are proficient in teaching reading, writing and mathematics and ensure that pupils have many opportunities

to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Pupils' results in the statutory tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 reflect their good achievement. In 2017, for example, progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was well above average and in the top 10% of schools nationally. By the end of Year 6, standards in these subjects are above average and frequently well above. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school when they leave, including those who are disadvantaged.

When the school was last inspected, leaders were asked to improve some aspects of teaching. They were also asked to involve the subject leaders for English and mathematics more in supporting improvement in these subjects. Both of these recommendations have been addressed well. The English and mathematics leaders have been influential in consolidating strengths in teaching and improving pupils' achievement. You and your leadership team are now concentrating on increasing the contribution of other subject leaders to school improvement, which includes developing assessment in all subjects. This is an appropriate priority to ensure that you and the governors have sufficient information about pupils' standards and progress in all of the subjects they study. Your review of the curriculum is also timely, given the recent changes to leadership roles.

Beyond English and mathematics, the curriculum is broad and includes a programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils named a variety of subjects they enjoy, with firm favourites being mathematics, science, physical education, art and 'forest school'. The high quality of artwork on display is testament to the awards your school has earned for this subject. Similar awards recognise quality provision in sport and physical education. While history was a popular subject with many pupils, their views about the amount of history they undertake vary. Pupils who were recently involved in a project about the First World War explained how much they enjoyed finding out about this period, including the role of women and how animals were used. They described how researching soldiers from the locality and visiting the theatre to see the play 'War Horse' made their learning memorable. While the school's curriculum plan shows that history is taught regularly to all year groups, some pupils consider that history is not something they do very often. Comments included, 'It's not a staple thing we do.' The sample of work I reviewed showed variation between year groups in the amount of history pupils had undertaken since the start of the year. However, this is likely to be because history is alternated with geography across the year.

The work that pupils are undertaking to achieve Unicef's final Rights Respecting School award makes a very valuable contribution to preparing them for life in modern Britain. The pupils with whom I spoke had a clear understanding of their own and others' rights. They had a similarly sound awareness of the principles that underpin fundamental British values, and the importance of respecting diversity. Pupils referred to skin colour, race, religion, sexuality, disability and social class in explaining the right of all people to be respected. Outside of this project, some of the work pupils undertake in different subjects includes issues about equalities and diversity. However, these ideas are not consistently well developed across the curriculum. Most of the significant people that pupils learn about, for example, are men. Pupils' work in books and on display also includes some stereotypical views of

men and women that have not been challenged. You agreed that the curriculum review would provide a good opportunity to address these issues and consider pupils' views about history.

Pupils live up to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. They listen carefully in lessons, contribute well and take great pride in how they present their work. Pupils like and trust their teachers. They say that the teachers are friendly, explain things well if they get stuck and are always there to help them.

Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils know how to stay safe, including when using the internet. Pupils are clear about the difference between bullying and occasional misbehaviour. They know what to do if they experience bullying or are aware that it is happening to someone else. Nearly all of the pupils I spoke to and those who completed the online pupil survey think that behaviour is good most of the time. They consider that bullying is rare. Most say that when bullying happens teachers are good at dealing with it. However, a small number of pupils and parents do not consider that bullying is dealt with effectively. The school could not provide records about bullying. You explained that this was because no formal allegations of bullying had ever been reported to you. You were unable to show me any information to illustrate how staff have dealt with bullying, whether actual or alleged. You appreciate that the school's record-keeping on this matter is not good enough. I also agree with your evaluation that the recording and analysis of all types of misbehaviour should be more thorough.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The checks made on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers to be around children are thorough and recorded meticulously. Since your appointment as headteacher, you have undertaken additional safeguarding training to allow you to stand in for the school's designated safeguarding leader when this might be necessary. Your recent review of this aspect of the school's work identified some shortfalls in other aspects of record-keeping. You have taken swift action to rectify this. You have introduced a new system with significant potential to improve record-keeping. You realise, however, that you will need to monitor closely how the system is used to ensure that it operates as intended. Despite these administrative weaknesses, the culture of safeguarding in the school is effective. Staff are aware of pupils who are vulnerable and keep a close eye on their welfare. Staff receive regular training to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. The staff I spoke to understood what they should do if they were concerned about a pupil's safety or well-being.

### **Inspection findings**

- A line of enquiry for the inspection was whether the most able pupils are achieving as well as they might in writing. Leaders and governors are aware that the proportions of pupils attaining greater depth in their writing are lower than in reading and mathematics, particularly at the end of Year 2. While the differences are not significant in relation to pupils nationally, leaders have prioritised this as an area for improvement. Your investigations into this matter have not identified

any weaknesses in the teaching of writing. You are, however, continuing to check that the school's strategy for teaching writing is consistently followed. There has also been a renewed focus on ensuring that writing skills and opportunities to write are fully capitalised upon in Reception and Year 1 so that pupils are ready for work in Year 2. By the end of Reception, children's skills in writing are generally little different to those attained by children this age nationally. This is also the case in relation to pupils' phonic skills at the end of Year 1. During our learning walk, it was clear that Reception children and those in key stage 1 were progressing well in writing. In the visits we made to classrooms to observe writing, teachers' secure subject knowledge was very evident. Your aim to ensure that pupils use adventurous and imaginative vocabulary was also evident in lessons and in the sample of work I reviewed. You are continuing your checks to confirm that the most able pupils are achieving their potential. The inspection evidence supports your view that pupils are working to the best of their abilities.

- Another line of enquiry was the extent to which subject leaders, other than for English and mathematics, are driving improvements within the wider curriculum. Leaders and governors rightly recognise that this is an area of the school's work that needs further development. Appropriately, it has been identified as a priority for improvement. You and governors are keen to ensure that you have more information about pupils' standards and progress in all of the subjects they study. As such, work is underway to develop assessment systems and extend subject leaders' checks of pupils' work. You recognise that, as leadership roles have recently been redistributed, it is a suitable time to audit the curriculum. You are leading discussions about the extent to which the curriculum meets the school's aims and continues to meet pupils' needs and interests. This includes a review of extra-curricular activities to further enhance pupils' creative and sporting skills.
- My final line of enquiry was about the school's work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. This was prompted by data showing that the rate of persistent absence at the school is higher than in primary schools nationally. You ensure that pupils and parents are aware of the importance of good attendance. As a result, the majority of pupils attend regularly. I am satisfied that most of the persistent absence is not within the school's control. In the very small number of instances where this is not the case, the actions you take to improve attendance are thorough and appropriate.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- beyond English and mathematics, subject leaders have a better understanding of pupils' achievements and the quality of provision in their subjects
- pupils learn more about equality, diversity and fundamental British values within subjects
- thorough central records about behaviour and bullying are kept and analysed
- the administration of safeguarding is strengthened.

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

Yours sincerely

Margot D'Arcy  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss the school's evaluation of its work and priorities for improvement. I reviewed a range of school documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. I met with six governors and a representative of the local authority. We observed learning and behaviour in a sample of lessons. I reviewed a sample of pupils' writing and topic work in books and on display around the school. I held a formal discussion with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and spoke to others informally at lunchtime. I spoke to approximately 25 parents as they brought their children to school. I took account of 27 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, including 16 written responses and one sent by email. I reviewed 11 responses to the online staff survey and 17 responses to the online pupil survey.