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Mrs Ceri Little  
Headteacher  
Clee Hill Community Academy  
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Clee Hill  
Ludlow  
Shropshire  
SY8 3NE

Dear Mrs Little

### **Short inspection of Clee Hill Community Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in October 2013.

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

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

The school converted to academy status in February 2015 and became part of the Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust. Since then, nursery provision, a breakfast club and after-school care have been added to improve continuity and care for pupils. You were appointed as headteacher in January 2017. You have continued to build on the school's strengths and quickly identified where further improvements are needed. You and your staff have a deep-rooted commitment to providing a happy, safe and nurturing environment for all pupils. The school's motto of 'Dream, Believe, Work, Achieve' sets the tone for the high aspirations embedded by you and your staff.

You have successfully addressed the areas identified as needing improvement from the predecessor school. Good and outstanding practice is shared widely across the school and within the trust. Staff share ideas and resources and work collaboratively to ensure that teacher assessments are accurate. A culture of mentoring and support is well-established, and staff are keen to improve their practice. This has led to a very positive learning environment and one in which staff are happy to work. Staff survey results confirm this.

In response to other previous key issues, the marking and feedback policies have

been re-written, and pupils now regularly respond and act upon teachers' comments and questions. Increased levels of challenge for the most able pupils have ensured that a greater proportion of pupils are now working at greater depth at the end of key stage 2. Equally, standards have risen in writing and mathematics and are above the national average in all subjects at the end of key stage 1. While there is a rising trend in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years, there is insufficient challenge in mathematics for children. Consequently, standards in this area of learning are static and not keeping pace with improvements in reading and writing. Further work is also needed to diminish attainment gender differences in Years 1 to 6 in English, as your current assessments show boys attain lower than girls in several year groups.

Parents, carers and pupils have very positive views of the school. Parents appreciate and value the support their children receive. A typical comment from a parent was, 'Great school, great staff, great before- and after-school club, great headteacher, just great, great, great!' Pupils are polite and respectful. They report that they enjoy school and are well supported. They identify the key value of the school as 'treating everyone respectfully' and are confident that this is the case.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have created a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You have ensured that safeguarding is a collective responsibility. It is of paramount importance to you and your staff that pupils feel safe and are fully protected from potential harm and dangers. As such, a central safety board is located in the reception area of the school so that it is accessible to everyone. Essential information and key contact numbers are available at this reference point. Staff receive regular training and updates to make sure they know what action to take if they are worried about a child. As the designated safeguarding leader, you ensure that swift referrals are made to appropriate authorities when incidents are raised, and detailed records are kept and stored securely. You are not afraid to challenge these agencies where you feel insufficient support or responses have been given. All safer recruitment checks are robustly carried out.

Pupils feel very safe at school. They have a detailed understanding of different types of abuse and bullying, and feel confident to report issues to adults in school or other agencies. Impressively, all Year 6 pupils spoken to knew the ChildLine telephone number off by heart. Assemblies, lessons and visiting speakers are all used effectively to teach pupils to keep themselves safe. Anti-bullying and e-safety week, together with Bikeability and drug awareness, all have a place on the school calendar. Pupils know that visitors to school must sign in and wear a visitor's badge. One hundred per cent of pupils who completed the pupil survey said they feel safe at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- You, your governors and the leadership team have evaluated the school's current position accurately and honestly. You are aspirational and clear about strengths and areas for improvement. Collectively, you carry out stringent monitoring of teaching and learning and analyse data carefully. Detailed and comprehensive plans are in place to achieve your objectives. Subject leaders attend and lead training and regularly monitor initiatives introduced to ensure that they have impact on outcomes. Together, you have continued to ensure that pupils receive consistently good-quality teaching.
- The wider tiers of leadership, specifically governance and the academy trust, know the school well. This is because members are actively involved in school life. They visit classrooms, talk with pupils and collect parents' views to gain an accurate picture of provision. They seek evidence of improvement to support decisions made. For example, when asked to invest further in breakfast club facilities, governors requested pupil case studies and measurable evidence to evaluate the impact of this facility. Both parties provide good levels of support and challenge to leaders and are fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school through contributing to development plans and formulating key priorities. Governors have a good understanding of data and know where strengths and weaknesses lie. The executive headteacher of the trust has also ensured that there is a shared vision within the trust, with high levels of consultation and collaboration embedded.
- The transfer of the on-site nursery from being privately run to being managed by the school has helped strengthen and extend early years provision. Children make good progress from their starting points. This is due to good teaching, effective adult support, accurate assessment and positive links with parents. Adults capture regular observations of children's skills and knowledge in an online assessment log. Parents add additional information to these logs to give an all-round view of children's abilities. This demonstrates positive home-school links. Standards in the early years in reading and writing have risen over a three-year period and are now above the national average. However, standards in mathematics have not kept pace with reading and writing and are in line with the national average as opposed to above. This is because children are not challenged sufficiently in the Reception class or build on skills they have already acquired. For example, adults' observations indicate that some children can use numbers up to twenty. Despite this, subsequent tasks only require them to use numbers up to ten, thus repeating work they can already do. Additionally, too many children reverse numbers and these are not picked up and addressed quickly enough by adults.
- Historic data and current in-school assessments show that, generally, boys do not attain as well as girls, especially in reading and writing. To this end, you have purchased boy-friendly texts to engage boys and encourage regular reading. Parent workshops, including 'Dads and Lads' have also been hosted to ensure that parents support their children and work in partnership with the school. A full review of reading and writing policies has been carried out and revisions made to the curriculum to accommodate boys' interests. Topics such as 'Aliens' and 'Dragons' are now incorporated into literacy-based activities together with a

cross-curricular approach, with pupils collecting 'reading miles' as they learn about different countries of the world. 'Talk for writing' projects have also been launched in all year groups to develop pupils' planning, recount and creative writing skills. It is, however, too early to determine the impact of these initiatives and in-year data shows gaps between boys and girls are still evident. You are clear that these initiatives will be carefully monitored to determine what impact they are having. You have also created case studies of individual boys to track progress of individuals and are monitoring differences in gender attainment throughout the year.

- Attendance of pupils in 2017 fell to below average and there was a high number of pupils who were persistently absent. You have taken firm and effective action on this issue and attendance this year has improved. You personally contact parents of repeat absentees directly on the first day of their absence, demonstrating your commitment and determination to inform parents that regular attendance is important. This action alone has made a dramatic difference to attendance figures. Additional follow-up is carried out every three weeks by the education welfare officer. Rewards and incentives are also proving to be successful with pupils striving hard to achieve 100% attendance each term. In discussion with governors, a free breakfast club and after-school care are now offered to disadvantaged pupils. Numbers attending have risen from five to 29 pupils and this has had a significant impact on attendance for these pupils.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- greater levels of challenge are provided for children in Reception Year in mathematics so that standards match those seen in reading and writing
- gender differences are diminished across the school so that boys achieve as well as girls in English.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, members of your governing body, the leadership team and the executive headteacher of the academy trust. I discussed the work of the school with you, including the processes and procedures in place for

safeguarding. I visited all classrooms, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I listened to pupils read and talked to pupils at lunchtime to gather their views about the school.

I looked at a range of school documents, including the school's information about pupils' achievement. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of its work, together with the school development plan. I took account of the 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own parent survey and letters sent in during the inspection. Additional information was collected from parents at the end of the school day. There were 12 responses to the staff questionnaire and 25 pupil responses. Their views were fully considered.