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Benjamin Turner
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Turner

Short inspection of Yardley Wood Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 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. You, your senior team and governors lead a school in which pupils are happy and keen to learn. The great majority of pupils who completed the pupil survey feel that the school helps them to be independent and encourages them to treat everyone equally and with respect.

Parents spoken to were very positive about the school's work, highlighting how approachable members of staff are, and how well they are kept informed of their children's progress. A number of parents who have known the school for a while commented on how much it has improved under your leadership. The great majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey would recommend the school to others. Similarly, almost all staff are proud to work in the school. They feel it has a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct and is aspirational for all pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has almost doubled in size, expanding from one-form to two-form entry. You have also experienced many changes in staffing. You now have a strong teaching team and a highly capable senior leadership team. Many of your middle leaders are relatively new in post. They are developing their roles and leadership skills and you are aware of the need to continue to support this development. Together, you have the determination and capacity to improve the school further.

The changes in school, along with a dip in results in 2016, led you to identify a number of areas that needed improvement to increase pupils' rates of progress and

their outcomes. Actions to address these areas are having an increasingly positive impact, especially in those areas that are more established, for example the teaching of phonics and mathematics. However, other new approaches, such as developments in reading and writing, need more time to embed before being fully effective.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that pupils have opportunities to explore ideas in depth. You have successfully addressed this by developing a broad and engaging curriculum. All pupils benefit from specialist teaching in computing, Spanish, physical education, music and philosophical enquiry. Younger pupils now have the opportunity to experience forest school. Where possible, teachers make relevant and exciting links across the curriculum. For example, the Year 2 topic 'Great Fire of London' included history, writing, art, design technology, computing, Spanish and the opportunity to learn about fire safety. This has a positive impact on the development of pupils' skills and knowledge.

You have also responded to the previous inspection report by introducing a new approach to the teaching of writing. This is increasingly providing pupils with opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of contexts and across different subjects. You have changed the way in which you teach handwriting, but this needs further work to ensure that standards of presentation are consistent across the school.

You are acutely aware that some pupils do not attend school regularly enough, and that attendance levels are in the lowest 10% of all primary schools. You and your team are taking extensive actions to address this, although there is limited impact to date. You and the governing body know that this is an area requiring further work.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a highly effective culture of safeguarding in the school. You do all that you can to ensure that the school is a safe environment for pupils. You emphasise that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility and all staff have regular and appropriate training to help them keep pupils safe from harm. Pupils are well cared for at all times.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are kept securely. You work with external agencies as necessary and you are persistent when there are concerns about pupils' welfare. Governors understand their role in overseeing and monitoring the effectiveness of school safeguarding procedures.

Pupils spoken to said that they feel safe in school and that they are taught to stay safe, for example through the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum. Pupils also understand about keeping safe when online. Pupils know who they can speak to in school if they have any worries or concerns.

Inspection findings

- The teaching of phonics is now strong and consistent. Pupils benefit from daily high-quality sessions that are engaging and include a range of activities. Adults have received effective training, which has improved the quality of teaching. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and staff have a clear understanding of what pupils need to do next to improve. As a result, most pupils are making good progress from their starting points and more pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- You have raised the profile of reading across the school, and have recently improved your school library so that it now has a wide range of books and provides a welcoming environment for pupils. Older pupils spoken to during the inspection were very appreciative of the effort teachers have made to develop the library and, as one pupil said: 'It is more than just a room of books; it is a place where pupils are inspired by books.' Pupils across the school read with an increasing fluency and expression that is appropriate for their age and reading ability. Older pupils can talk about which authors and genres of books they enjoy reading.
- You have introduced a new, more structured approach to the teaching of reading from Year 2 to Year 6. Pupils speak positively about this programme and they like the fact that they are able to choose which book they will read next. Adults monitor the number and types of books selected to ensure that pupils are accessing a wide range of texts. However, because this approach is relatively new, it is too soon to be able to measure any improvement in pupils' reading skills.
- You have developed the teaching of writing following a programme of staff training and the introduction of a new writing scheme. Progress can be seen in pupils' books and the level of challenge and support provided is matched to pupils' needs. The assessment of writing is becoming more accurate and teachers' judgements are checked rigorously. As a result, standards are starting to rise across the school.
- Following a successful trial period, you introduced a different approach to teaching mathematics across key stages 1 and 2. This is ensuring that all pupils have regular opportunities to explain their thinking and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. Pupils' books show that they cover a wide range of mathematical topics and apply their skills in practical situations. Rates of pupils' progress and their outcomes in mathematics are increasing.
- The way in which you monitor and track pupils' progress has improved. As a result, you identify where pupils are at risk of falling behind and take appropriate action to address these concerns. From a typically low starting point on entry to school, current information and work in pupils' books suggests that more pupils are on track to achieve the standards expected for their age than in the past. This is the case at the end of early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The school provides a calm and welcoming environment for pupils, who generally behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Pupils play and socialise well together, making good use of the wide range of equipment and

resources available to them at break and lunchtimes. Adults log any behaviour concerns that they have and leaders follow these up appropriately. For example, you encourage pupils to understand the consequences of any poor behaviour, and to take steps to put it right.

- While many of your pupils have good attendance, there are a significant group who do not attend school regularly enough. This means that, compared to other primary schools, the rate of pupils' absence is very high. You are taking action to try to address this. For example, you track the attendance of individual pupils rigorously and you work with parents when attendance drops below an acceptable level. You are now working more closely with external agencies and there are early indications that this is having a positive impact for those families involved. However, you and the governing body are aware that more needs to be done to improve this situation. The procedures you and your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education.
- Due to the school expanding in size, and other staff changes, many members of your middle-leadership team are relatively new in post. They are growing in experience, and have opportunities to monitor and develop their subjects or areas of responsibility. You are aware of the need to continue to support their development to ensure that they have a strong focus on maximising pupils' progress across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- developments to raise standards further in reading and writing are embedded across the school
- pupils' handwriting and standards of presentation improve
- middle leaders are supported to develop their roles to enhance pupils' progress
- levels of attendance improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher, the inclusion

manager, middle leaders and other members of staff. I met with representatives of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors. I also met with a representative of Birmingham Education Partnership. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils, both formally and informally.

Along with a member of staff, I visited almost all classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, assessment information and documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of 28 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 10 free-text responses. I also took account of 41 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 204 responses to the pupil survey.