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Ms Laura Bodin
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Dear Ms Bodin

Short inspection of Glebiefields Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 December 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

In recent years, there have been several changes to leadership personnel. Due to unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances, the headteacher has been absent from school for two sustained periods. You take responsibility for the school in the headteacher's absence. Since the last inspection, the leadership structure has also gone through changes and several leaders are relatively new to post.

This period of instability has led to inconsistencies in the quality of leadership. Leaders and governors do not have a strong enough shared understanding of the most important priorities for the school. The self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan do not link coherently together. Improvement priorities in the main plan lack measurable success criteria. You have only recently started in the post of acting headteacher, but have rightly identified that improvement planning requires greater precision. Middle leaders' action plans are generally more focused and help to bring about improvements in their areas of responsibility.

The lack of clarity in improvement planning has hampered the school's progress, since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching in lower key stage 2 is inconsistent. Some staff's subject knowledge is not as precise as it should be and pupils' progress is slow. However, there is consistently good teaching in other parts of the school. Children get off to a positive start in the early years and make steady

progress in key stage 1. Teaching is notably effective in Years 5 and 6. In this phase of the school, teachers' high expectations are reflected in the strong rates of progress seen in pupils' books.

The majority of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. You have put in place training for staff to ensure that they can meet the needs of most-able pupils. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards in reading and mathematics was just above the national average. You recognise that there is further work to do to ensure that more pupils attain the higher standards in writing across the school. You have successfully improved pupils' attendance and, in 2017, absence levels were similar to the national average. This is a notable improvement on levels seen at the previous inspection.

The governing body has gone through several changes since the previous inspection. In the academic year 2016/17, a review of governance took place. An experienced chair of governors was appointed in September 2017. He has brought a greater level of challenge through school visits and meetings. While there have been improvements to governance, there is still work to do. Governors have not ensured that some key statutory information is available on the website. The safeguarding policy published on the website is an old version and the most recent version has not been reviewed by governors during this academic year. The statutory information on the school's use of the pupil premium is not fully compliant. Leaders do outline how the money has been spent, but the impact of the strategies is yet to be evaluated for the previous academic year.

The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. It has helped to guide the school sensitively through the recent changes and is acutely aware of areas that need improving.

The early years is well led. Staff across the Nursery and Reception work well together and have a deep understanding of children's needs. Children are particularly well supported to improve their speech, language and communication skills. The outdoor area is very well developed and provides a rich stimulus for children's learning.

A thoughtful range of enrichment activities contributes well to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy the range of trips that they go on, linked to the curriculum. They were excited to share how much they learned on their visits to places such as York, London, a Second World War museum, and Aberdovey for a residential trip. You also make sure that pupils develop a mature understanding and tolerance of other faiths. Older pupils in school described how radical or extreme minority views do not necessarily represent the typical majority views of a religion.

Leaders and staff manage behaviour very well. Behaviour in lessons and at social times is good. Some pupils who have significant emotional and social barriers are well supported to access learning. Key staff, such as the behaviour lead, learning mentors and the family liaison worker, contribute well to this process.

Safeguarding is effective.

In the absence of the headteacher, you are the designated safeguarding lead. Much of the day-to-day safeguarding follow up and work with external agencies is done by the deputy safeguarding lead. The two of you work closely together to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Regular staff training has led to a culture of vigilance across the school. Staff are absolutely clear about recording incidents and how to identify different signs of abuse. The deputy safeguarding lead works very closely with external agencies and follows concerns up thoroughly.

The safeguarding policy is reviewed by you and the deputy safeguarding lead. It has gone through several changes, and the vast majority of the policy meets statutory requirements. However, one of the documents referenced in the policy is no longer in use and is not up to date. Governors have not reviewed the most recent policy. While the culture for keeping pupils safe is good, this aspect of compliance needs addressing.

You have worked hard to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. A safety day provides opportunities for specialists, such as from the police and the fire service and a 'Prevent' duty representative, to talk to pupils about safety. Regular teaching of e-safety has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- At the end of Year 1 in 2017, the proportion of pupils that achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check dipped below the national average. This was a decline on the results from 2016. The key stage 1 leader has worked closely with staff to refine the approach to teaching phonics. Regular staff training has led to effective phonics teaching. Leaders carry out regular assessments and track pupils' progress very well. Pupils who are not on track for the expected standard are identified and given effective additional support to help them catch up in their reading. Leaders' assessment information shows that decline in phonics attainment has been successfully addressed.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards for their age at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in writing has been below the national average for several years. You have put in place training for staff, so that there is a more effective sequence for the teaching of writing. The most able pupils are reading a wider range of books, so that they are exposed to more sophisticated language. Some of these strategies are relatively new and need embedding fully. One particular aspect that is holding writers back is the quality of their handwriting. Work in pupils' books shows that handwriting does not develop well over time.
- In 2016, attainment at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 was low when compared to the national averages. You showed convincing information to demonstrate that, in 2016, the Year 6 pupils had significant barriers to learning,

yet still made good progress from their starting points. Attainment improved considerably in 2017, particularly at the end of key stage 2. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. Pupils make strong progress as they move through Years 5 and 6. However, due to the inconsistencies in teaching, pupils' progress is not as rapid during Years 3 and 4.

- The headteacher has implemented a new leadership structure. More middle leaders have been given responsibility in order to share leadership more widely across the school. They are proactive and enjoy leading on their areas of responsibility. The impact of their work is evident in some of the improvements in early years, phonics, attendance, English, physical education and mathematics.
- The overall evaluation of pupil premium strategies is not strong enough. In the academic year 2016/17, there was no overall evaluation done, so leaders and governors do not have a deep understanding of which strategies are proving most successful. There is clear spending planning for 2017/18 outlining how the money is allocated, but it does not state how the strategies will be measured for impact. Leaders do have information on the ground about the impact of the strategies. For example, leaders have a range of information about the improvements in reading ages for those individual pupils receiving reading interventions. However, this information is not pulled together to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies as a whole.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils fared well when compared to other pupils nationally. As disadvantaged pupils progress through the school, their attainment gradually diminishes against other pupils nationally. However, due to the complex needs of some disadvantaged pupils, their attainment can be low at key stage 1. The evaluation of pupil premium funding does not enable leaders to analyse deeply how effective their strategies are, particularly at this critical juncture of disadvantaged pupils' education.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- self-evaluation and improvement plans clearly outline the key priorities and how priorities in the plans will be measured for success
- strategies in the pupil premium plan are evaluated precisely for impact
- all statutory documents, including the safeguarding policy and the evaluation of the pupil premium, are scrutinised by governors and published on the website
- the variability of teaching in lower key stage 2 is addressed, so that pupils' progress accelerates in this phase of the school
- approaches to the teaching of writing are fully embedded, so that attainment rises, particularly for the most able pupils and for pupils in key stage 1
- the teaching of handwriting improves, so that pupils' handwriting develops well over time.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Meckin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other leaders. I also met with two governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to 10 lessons with you and looked at a range of pupils' books. I spoke to parents and carers at the start of the day and considered 12 free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the responses from the online questionnaire completed by pupils and staff.

I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. We discussed the national test results and the results of assessments undertaken by pupils in 2016 and 2017. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.