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3 July 2018

Mrs C Shaw  
Headteacher  
Sherbrook Primary School  
Grainger Court  
Cannock  
Staffordshire  
WS11 5SA

Dear Mrs Shaw

### **Short inspection of Sherbrook Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 June 2018 with Johanne Clifton, Ofsted Inspector, 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 March 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 and governors have created a caring and happy school that all stakeholders are proud of. You and your deputy headteacher know your school exceptionally well. You have the children's interests at heart.

The learning environment has developed significantly in recent years. The school is housed in a modern, purpose-built building with excellent facilities. Staff feel very proud to work at Sherbrook. They are keen to share their practice and want the very best for children.

Improvement work is focused on the individual needs of children. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored. Leaders and staff have a very strong awareness of the steps that pupils need to take to address any gaps in their learning.

Leaders have prioritised supporting the mental health and well-being of their staff and pupils. People who have specific expertise have been appointed to support well-being and ensure that the whole school community has a point of contact should they feel the need for additional support or advice.

You began your role as headteacher in September 2015 and have worked with the deputy headteacher to ensure that the school continues to grow. As a result, practice has developed and you have a very clear overview of pupils' achievement. In the last 12 months you have also supported middle leaders to play a greater role in school improvement. These leaders have completed nationally recognised

training. They are beginning to bring much greater capacity to leadership and management and are keen to have an even greater impact on the school's overall effectiveness.

Every member of staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire feels that the school is aspirational for all pupils. Staff also feel that leaders and managers take workload into account. The vast majority of parents also hold positive views about the school. Almost all parents feel that the school is well led and would recommend it to another parent. Several parents submitted free-text responses during the inspection. All of the responses were positive and included comments such as: 'The staff genuinely care about my child,' and 'A truly superb school that has encouraged the development of my child greatly.'

Staff and pupils are also proud of their school dog. Eric is a cocker spaniel therapy dog who joined the school as a puppy in 2016. He is well loved by pupils and has received special training to work in schools. Eric regularly joins pupils on visits outside of school. Pupils have also taken Eric to visit the local vet. The vet helped pupils to use a stethoscope and confirmed that Eric is in a fit and healthy condition.

At the last inspection you were asked to increase the amount of outstanding teaching and further raise pupils' achievement. Staff have received a comprehensive programme of ongoing professional development. This training and challenge has helped staff develop the way they pitch and present learning to pupils.

During the inspection, almost all pupils were engaged and enjoying their learning. Work in books shows that pupils make consistently strong progress. This progress is reflected in your assessment information and you have undertaken work to moderate teachers' judgements with other schools. However, there is some variability in the overall quality of teaching. On occasion, the precise skills that pupils will learn during a lesson are not clear enough. Some teachers do not capitalise on opportunities to promote pupils' independence or ensure that pupils' interests are incorporated fully into learning. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are actively involved in their learning and adults' questions are highly effective. This stronger practice is not yet consistent across the school.

The last inspection team also asked you to improve the school's accommodation so that it better supports learning. As already outlined, the building and facilities have changed significantly. Classrooms and smaller spaces for individual and group work are well designed. The whole environment is welcoming and purposeful. Staff make good use of the space available. Pupils' views were considered in the design and construction of the outside area. The school has a large field that is accessible to all, a picnic area and an outdoor classroom. Outdoor learning is a core part of your offer at Sherbrook.

Although the school has developed since the last inspection and is responding effectively to the areas for improvement, there is more work to be done in ensuring that the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently high. There is also scope for middle leaders to have an even greater impact on standards

as they establish themselves in their new roles, and to have more opportunity to apply the skills that they have learned through their training.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school has developed well-organised systems for tracking and recording any concerns about children. Staff work effectively with other agencies and safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

The designated safeguarding lead conducts a skills audit at the start of the year to ascertain staff's knowledge and understanding of different safeguarding matters. Findings from this audit are used to prioritise training. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and leaders commission external audits to ensure that policies and procedures are in line with government guidance.

### **Inspection findings**

- The school has a relatively high number of children looked after. Children looked after are well cared for. Personal education plans include appropriate targets, and progress towards meeting these targets is monitored by staff. The quality of targets can vary slightly, but the objectives agreed with social workers are focused on individual pupils' needs.
- The school's accessibility plan identified the need to develop the outdoor environment so that it is more accessible and conducive to learning. The actions set out in the school's plan have been completed and the school field and grounds provide valuable spaces for pupils to socialise and learn in. Leaders and governors take full account of the needs of pupils and improve their school accordingly.
- Governors have a strong oversight of school improvement. There are many governors who have specific skills in education. Equally, other governors offer support in relation to safeguarding and healthcare. They have audited their skills to ensure that they have a good balance of expertise on the governing body. They regularly visit the school to satisfy themselves that the information provided in meetings reflects the day-to-day practice.
- Middle leaders are now beginning to establish themselves in their roles. They have regular opportunities to quality-assure the impact of teaching in their phases. However, some of this work is at an early stage. Some middle leaders are not yet clear about the precise strengths and areas for development in their teams. As a result, there remains some variation in the quality of teaching.
- In recent months, a programme has been established to provide teachers with opportunities to share their practice. It is too early to see the impact of this strategy, but leaders are keen to ensure that staff share the aspects of their work that they know are working well.
- Pupils make consistently strong progress, but this could be accelerated even further. During the inspection, some lessons did not routinely promote pupils' independence. Furthermore, there were occasions when the level of challenge

dropped. This was often because pupils were not encouraged to do something for themselves, or their interests were not expanded upon further.

- Teachers use effective resources and strategies to support pupils' writing. As a result, pupils' books show strong progress from their different starting points.
- Additional funding is allocated effectively to support the well-being and achievement of pupils. Expenditure is monitored carefully and the school is able to clearly evidence the positive impact that additional funding has on standards.
- Pupils' behaviour was very good throughout the inspection. Pupils' listen carefully to staff and want to do the right thing. Leaders track any incidents of poor behaviour thoroughly and take effective actions in response to any findings or trends.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have further opportunities to improve their practice by sharing the most effective teaching more widely
- teachers identify the exact skills that pupils will learn in each lesson
- pupils' independence is promoted even further
- middle leaders receive further training and support so that they have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective phases and have an even greater impact on raising standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Keay  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. We agreed key lines of enquiry on which to focus inspection activity. The inspection team visited most classes across the school. Lesson observations were undertaken jointly with leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised work in pupils' books.

The lead inspector held a meeting with five governors, including the vice-chair of governors. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with an adviser commissioned by the local authority. The local authority's consultant for special

educational needs and inclusion was also present at the final feedback meeting.

The inspection team took account of the following stakeholder feedback: 32 respondents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 12 responses on free-text and 27 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors met with parents, escorts and taxi drivers at the start of the day as pupils arrived at school.