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5 July 2018

Mrs Suzanne Rose  
Ward End Primary School  
Ingleton Road  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
B8 2RA

Dear Mrs Rose

### **No formal designation inspection of Ward End Primary School**

Following my visit with Chris Wright, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 19 June 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about outcomes for pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. They met with the headteacher, senior leaders, parents, family support workers and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors spoke to a representative of the local authority and a school improvement adviser by telephone.

Inspectors carried out joint learning walks with senior leaders, observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and evaluated pupils' work. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime and spoke to pupils informally. A range of documentation was scrutinised, including attendance and behaviour records, assessment information, governors' minutes, records of monitoring and evaluation, the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plan.

Having considered the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school continues to be outstanding and safeguarding is effective.

## Context

The number of pupils on roll is 895. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to expand in size from two to four classes in each year group. The current Year 6, however, has five classes. The level of deprivation is in the highest 20% in England. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, predominantly from Asian backgrounds. In recent years, an increasing number of Eastern European pupils have joined the school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The expansion of the school has resulted in building works and an increase in the number of new staff.

The inspection took place because pupils' progress and attainment have declined since 2015. Leaders recognise that outcomes are currently good and not outstanding. In recent years, the school has undergone some significant changes which have altered the demographics of the school. Many pupils have joined the school with complex additional needs, physical difficulties, lack of previous schooling and, on occasions, little or no English. Leaders have responded well to the changing needs of the school. The school has a strong and stable staff in place. They are well supported by senior leaders so that the quality of teaching is effective and pupils make good progress. Staff know their pupils well. Senior leaders track the progress and attainment of pupils closely and provide appropriate interventions for pupils who need to catch up. As a result, outcomes, which have slipped from outstanding to good, are now recovering. The school's assessment information and work in books indicates that, following the dip, progress and attainment for current pupils are now on an upward trajectory.

Leaders are aspirational for pupils and are focused on achieving the best outcomes for them. The leadership structure has ensured that all leaders respond well to the personal, social and academic needs of pupils. They set ambitious but realistic targets for them. All classes have a 'class improvement plan' where leaders identify specific support, key actions, staffing, resources and intended outcomes. Leaders monitor closely any attainment gaps between boys and girls and disadvantaged pupils, for example. They ensure that any gaps are addressed through effective teaching and interventions.

The quality of teaching is consistently strong. Pupils are engaged and motivated in their learning because work is set at the right level. Teachers address misconceptions promptly so that pupils make strong progress. Teachers use effective questioning well to deepen pupils' thinking. For example, in Year 6 pupils explored the meanings of interesting words such as 'galling' and looked for evidence to show the traits of a particular character. In mathematics, pupils' ability to reason and solve problems is developed well. Pupils' work is well presented because pupils take a pride in their work. Additional adults are used well to support teaching and

learning. Teachers have developed a supportive and encouraging climate for learning and as a result pupils are keen to contribute their ideas and take ownership of their learning.

Children join the school with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age. A significant number of children now join Reception from a range of different settings because the school's Nursery has not grown in line with the increasing intake. The quality of teaching in early years is highly effective and, as a result, children make outstanding progress. Daily routines are well established. At snack time, adults develop and reinforce children's language, number and social skills exceptionally well. Opportunities for imaginative play indoors and out contribute to a stimulating learning environment. Children play together well and are actively encouraged to learn independently. For example, without close adult supervision, some children completed a tally chart of their favourite characters from a book, some created a number necklace and some wrote their own number cards. Children demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and develop key skills at a rapid pace. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is broadly in line with the national average.

In key stage 1, in 2016, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics dipped below the national average. Leaders have taken effective action to successfully address the dip in standards. Attainment improved in 2017 and again in 2018. Provisional results for 2018 indicate that current attainment has improved. It is likely to be at least in line or above the national average at both the expected standard and at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in phonics have also continued to rise in 2018 to above the national average for 2017.

In key stage 1, pupils have developed a stamina for writing and can write at length. Work in books shows that pupils can write using complex sentences and use imaginative language. They are developing their use of cursive script but currently the quality of handwriting and presentation is inconsistent. In reading, pupils are well supported through effective strategies such as 'scene setting' to help them understand text. Pupils draw a scene to help them pick out features of a text, for example what a creature looks like. Pupils, particularly those with English as an additional language, further develop their acquisition of language through the use of dictionaries and thesauri. Pupils who need help to catch up in phonics are given effective additional support. In mathematics, pupils are given many opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. For example, they are asked, 'do you agree?' and are asked to explain, 'I know this because...'. Occasionally, in mathematics, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, the progress of pupils in reading and mathematics dipped below the national average. Leaders explained that this particular cohort of pupils had a high proportion of complex additional needs and a disrupted year with regards to staffing which hindered their continuity of learning and their progress. Nevertheless, leaders reviewed their approach to the teaching of

reading because pupils were not making the progress of which they are capable. They have improved the teaching of reading so that all pupils can access higher-level text. Reading is well supported and as a result pupils are making at least good progress. Comprehension skills such as inference and deduction are well developed through a range of strategies and effective questioning. For example, pupils in Year 5 use text to infer meaning of words such as 'mantle', 'nobles' and 'snappishly'.

Leaders recognise that outcomes in mathematics have not recovered as quickly as in reading and writing. They have improved the quality of teaching in mathematics through visiting other outstanding schools, training and research and pupils are now making good or better gains in their learning. Two staff have trained as specialist mathematics teachers and have supported other staff to improve their practice so that teaching is more effective. Pupils demonstrate clear strategies for calculations. They use and apply their mathematical knowledge well. Work in pupils' books indicates that they are appropriately challenged to think more deeply through solving problems and are encouraged to fully explain their reasoning, for example, 'this is false because...'. Consequently, most pupils are now working at age-related expectations or above in the subject.

Current assessment information shows that in all years pupils are making the progress that leaders expect them to and are on track to meet the ambitious targets set. Disadvantaged pupils are helped to catch up through appropriate interventions and support. As a result, they are making good progress. School data indicates that outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are likely to be at least in line with national averages at the end of key stage 2. This is an improvement on the below-average outcomes achieved last year.

Pupils are exceptionally polite and courteous. They hold doors open and treat others with respect. In the Nursery, children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' at snack time. They respond well to adults and each other. In lessons, learning is purposeful and pupils are focused on their work. They are highly engaged and enthusiastic about their learning. Inspectors observed no disruption in learning. Pupils work well independently, with one another and with adults. Routines are well established. Pupils move calmly and in an orderly manner around school. They play together well at break and lunchtimes. Pupils who have difficulties managing their own behaviour are closely monitored and they are well supported by senior staff.

Almost all parents and carers spoken to at the beginning of the inspection were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Many said that their children were taught well and made good progress.

Despite the school's best endeavours, improving attendance remains a challenge for the school. School leaders, supported by family support workers, work hard to improve pupils' attendance. Leaders hold weekly meetings, for example, with parents who plan to take pupils on extended leave. Family support workers target families to challenge poor attendance and punctuality. They build effective

relationships through home visits and welcome families into school. Pupils with poor attendance are suitably supported by a learning mentor. Attendance is high-profile, with weekly targets and awards. Persistent absence has reduced significantly for some pupils, especially pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Although there is some improvement overall, attendance figures remain below the national average.

Safeguarding is effective. There are clear processes in place for reporting child protection concerns and staff are regularly updated about safeguarding practice. Appropriate support is provided for families and pupils who need it. Leaders know their community well. Parent workshops inform parents on aspects of safeguarding such as domestic violence, mental health, female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. Pupils receive e-safety training and training on how to keep themselves safe. They say that they feel safe in school.

Governors provide good support and challenge to school leaders. They have a clear overview of the context, strengths and development priorities of the school. They keep a close eye on outcomes through regular scrutiny meetings supported by the school's improvement adviser. Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Safeguarding is a high priority and governors regularly review their statutory duties so that they are met.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that all pupils continue to make substantial and sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics to further improve outcomes.
- Provide additional challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics, especially in key stage 1.
- Address inconsistencies in handwriting and presentation.
- Further improve and sustain attendance rates for all groups of pupils.

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

Sue Cameron

**Her Majesty's Inspector**