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Mr Christopher Blunt
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Blunt

Short inspection of Spring Vale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You, the governing body and staff have created a rich and extremely positive learning environment, which pupils, parents and carers highly value. You are unwavering in your intentions to give pupils the skills and knowledge they need to be ready to learn and achieve. For example, your 'walk into learning' start of the day enables pupils to be immediately greeted by teachers and to take part in learning activities. As a result, no time is wasted, pupils develop a positive attitude, they are ready to learn and are very well prepared for their next stage in learning.

Pupils spoken to during the inspection very much value the learning opportunities you and your staff provide, and the information teachers give them so that they improve their work. A group of pupils explained that, 'Our motto [of] together everyone achieves more really fits this school.' They went on to say that, 'The next steps printed in our books really help us to know what to do next.' As a result, pupils are confident learners who are proud of their achievements and of the school.

You are determined to promote the importance of developing pupils' reading skills. As a result, you and your staff you have created a positive reading culture where pupils value and enjoy reading. Staff provide pupils with regular opportunities to read at school and at home. The bright, well-resourced library provides a popular space to sit and read. Pupils who spoke to me are adamant that they enjoy reading and that they read at home and at school on a regular basis. Consequently, pupils make strong progress in their reading.

You and other leaders have systematically addressed the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. You have provided very effective training for teachers. As a result, teachers have strong understanding of the subjects they teach. Teachers are highly skilled in their use of questioning and planning sequences of lessons, which deepen pupils thinking and acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Together, you and the staff have taught pupils to be resilient learners. Pupils spoken to during the inspection confidently told me how they use a range of strategies when they think they are stuck in their learning before asking the teacher. These include, 'Brain, book, buddy, me (teacher)'.

Teachers deliver highly focused interventions, which support pupils to improve their skills and knowledge. Leaders rigorously track the progress of disadvantaged pupils and the impact of these interventions. As a result, a significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils make at least expected progress and by the end of key stage 2 they are making similar progress to other pupils in the school.

Pupils' behaviour is very good both in and outside of lessons. Pupils quickly learn school routines and understand the behaviour reward system 'Good to be Green'. They are attentive to the adults who support them and respectful of one another. As a result, they are ready to learn in lessons.

You and the staff have created a highly inclusive school, which values and celebrates diversity. Through the many opportunities both in the curriculum and in assemblies, pupils are taught about different faiths and cultures and how to work and live together in modern Britain. You, the staff, parents and pupils are rightly proud of the diversity in your school and this is routinely celebrated.

Parents who spoke to me and who completed the online questionnaire described your leadership as 'fantastic'. These parents highly commend the work you do with their children and the improvements you implement in the school. They very much appreciate the open and enthusiastic approach of the teachers. Some parents told me that you provide a wide range of exciting learning opportunities, which they say enable their children to make 'impressive progress'.

You and the deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. You systematically monitor and review the quality of teaching and learning. This enables leaders to provide strong guidance to improve teaching. As a result, teaching is very well focused on the needs of pupils and pupils make strong progress. However, you are

to provide further support so that everyone routinely provides highly focused lessons.

You and the staff promote the importance of attendance and celebrate attendance both of classes and individual pupils. You provide support to families and pupils who have genuine reasons for not attending school. However, you rightly recognise that there is a small number of pupils who need to improve their attendance further.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The person responsible for safeguarding has completed training and attends regular updates provided by the local authority. The person responsible for safeguarding welcomes the opportunity to continually develop best safeguarding practices. He has commissioned termly support from the local authority's safeguarding adviser.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that adults in the school are well trained and kept up to date. They have developed a positive culture where safeguarding is central to the school's work. Staff and governors know their responsibilities in keeping children safe and are clear about how to raise concerns. All the correct checks on staff and visitors are completed and recorded.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through the curriculum, assemblies and dedicated weeks throughout the year. For example, pupils learn about different types of bullying. Pupils know how to raise concerns, they feel safe and are safe.

Parents spoken to during the inspection and through the responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, are confident that all staff in the school ensure that their children are safe. They know how to raise concerns with you and are confident to do so.

Inspection findings

- You and the deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. You are determined to provide and celebrate a balanced curriculum, which prepares pupils for their next stage in their learning. You and the deputy headteacher provide strong role models of leadership and teaching. Consequently, leaders are highly effective in developing and supporting new leaders.
- Leaders have created an outward-facing culture. You value and commission support and guidance from external agencies. For example, middle leaders work closely with the local authority advisers to further develop teaching. As a result, the school has made significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Leaders have established a clear approach to the teaching of writing and provide training and support to staff. Teachers are extremely effective at implementing this approach, which begins with a motivating 'hook' to engage pupils. Teachers systematically plan and teach a series of lessons to help pupils learn the different

writing skills, which they then practise and use to improve their work. Pupils demonstrate and celebrate their progress in their 'Big Write' books. As a result, pupils make strong progress in their writing.

- Teachers work closely together to share best practice. For example, through work scrutiny, research and training, teachers have made changes to the way they teach mathematics. They now routinely provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems in each lesson. During lessons, teachers consistently ask pupils to 'demonstrate', and 'prove' their answers. Consequently, pupils develop a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught.
- Pupils' books illustrate the many opportunities they are given to develop and apply their writing, reading and mathematical skills in different subjects. For example, pupils wrote letters and reports related to their topic work about Florence Nightingale.
- Pupils talk confidently about their work. They also mention the opportunities that they have to take part in sport. They value the opportunity to represent the school in a number of external competitions.
- Teaching in the early years enables pupils to make strong progress and prepares them well for key stage 1. Workshops at the beginning of the academic year help parents to understand how they can support their children to learn at home. Each week children take home activities to do with their parents. Parents use the class 'proud cloud' to share with the school their children's achievements from home.
- There are considerable strengths in teaching which were observed during the inspection and evidenced through leaders' rigorous monitoring and reviewing of the quality of teaching. The work in pupils' books shows that they build well on prior learning and are provided with challenging tasks to develop a greater depth of knowledge and skills.
- The majority of pupils attend school regularly. The personal circumstances of a few pupils have an adverse impact on their attendance. Despite leaders' attempts to address the attendance of other pupils, a few continue to be away from school too often.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they provide appropriate support for staff where needed to strengthen teaching further
- they continue to strive to reduce persistent absence of a small number of pupils in school.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Clugston
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher, leaders and members of the governing body. I spoke with local authority's school improvement adviser. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 29 free-text comments.

I reviewed a range of other documents including your self-evaluation, school development plan, assessment and progress information, as well as documents relating to safeguarding, staff recruitment checks and child protection procedures.

I visited classes with senior leaders to observe teaching and learning. I spoke to pupils during and outside of lessons and looked at their work both in and outside of lessons.