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Mr Tuffin  
Headteacher  
Frederick Bird Primary School  
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Dear Mr Tuffin

### **Short inspection of Frederick Bird Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 25 September 2018 with Jonathan Moore, 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 January 2014.

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.**

Since your appointment as headteacher at Frederick Bird Primary in September 2018, you have quickly established with the staff that there is work to be done to improve standards. You have listened to their views and agreed what needs to be addressed first. You have recently introduced a much clearer assessment system so that staff and leaders can assess pupils' progress and attainment more easily. However, this new system will take some time to embed. Staff are committed and proud to work at Frederick Bird. Several staff commented on the positive changes you have already made this term.

You are a visible presence in the school and walk the perimeter of the school outside each morning so that you can get to know as many pupils and parents in your community as possible. Most parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive about the school. Some parents commented on the effective support their children received for behaviour, additional needs and when they were newly arrived in the country.

Pupils are mostly well behaved. However, inspectors observed some boisterous behaviour at lunchtime. In the morning, staff greet pupils as they enter school and pupils settle to work quickly because routines are well established. Pupils are friendly and kind and play well together. Pupils respond well to teachers and are

keen and enthusiastic to contribute in lessons, especially when teaching is strong.

Governors are committed to the school. However, they do not take a strategic role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of leaders' work on pupils' outcomes effectively. Their visits to school are not sufficiently focused on areas of school improvement. Consequently, they cannot hold leaders to account well enough.

Since the last inspection leaders have taken steps to address the quality of handwriting and presentation. However, teachers' expectations are not high enough to ensure that the quality of handwriting and presentation is consistently good across the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. They liaise effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible. Clear systems are in place for reporting concerns about pupils and for the safe recruitment of staff. However, not all staff receive safeguarding training as quickly as they should when they join the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Outcomes in reading are not as strong as in writing and mathematics. Leaders have taken positive steps to address the attainment and progress of pupils in reading. The school has introduced a variety of approaches to foster a love of reading and improve fluency. For example, all year groups have a reading area and the school employs a 'reading champion' to encourage reading in the school's two attractive libraries. In lessons pupils have been introduced to a wider range of quality texts to broaden pupils' vocabulary. They are beginning to develop improved skills in reading, including skimming, scanning, retrieving text, summarising and inference. These skills are developed more effectively in Years 5 and 6. In Year 6, pupils were highly engaged when listening to the class teacher read and were disappointed when it ended. They looked for evidence in the text to identify similar features to other stories they had read and made inferences about events in the story. Although provisional results show that attainment in reading improved at the higher standard in 2018, overall attainment in reading remains below average. For current pupils, the quality of written outcomes that pupils produce in response to their reading is not good enough because teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough in all classes. In some year groups, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged because some comprehension tasks are limited.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently good enough in all year groups and most pupils are currently working at below the expected standard in phonics. The most able pupils read well and sound out words they are unsure of. They can summarise and understand the text they have read. They use their phonics knowledge to write phonetically plausible words. For example, pupils in Year 1 wrote sentences about snow and read their work back accurately. However, lower-ability pupils have limited phonic skills to decode words and read common

exception words such as 'said'. Some pupils are over-reliant on pictures to help them read and guess words instead of decoding them. On occasion, pupils are not helped to form letters accurately because the equipment they use to write and record on makes it difficult for them to do it well. As a result of a decline in standards in 2018, leaders have reviewed the teaching of phonics. Pupils are now grouped across Years 1, 2 and 3 to receive a daily phonics session so that pupils who did not meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check can be helped to catch up. As these changes have been recently introduced, the impact of this on pupils' progress is yet to be seen.

- Outcomes in early years are improving. Teachers encourage children to sound out initial sounds of objects and show them how to form letters accurately. Children sing songs and nursery rhymes and look at books with adults. Children play independently and match the names of characters to pictures in the reading corner. Some children are beginning to use initial sounds to identify words. However, children do not have as many opportunities to develop reading and writing skills in the outdoor area.
- Attendance is below the national average and has remained static for several years. Persistent absence is high but has reduced closer to the national average. The attendance officer is very committed to tackling weak attendance and to getting pupils to school. However, leaders do not have a strategic approach to managing attendance. Attendance information is not analysed effectively and there is a lack of understanding of which groups of pupils have poor attendance. The reasons why some pupils do not attend school are not sufficiently explored.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the induction process for new staff ensures that they receive safeguarding training as soon as possible
- teachers have high expectations and adopt a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting to improve the quality of pupils' presentation
- in early years, children are further challenged to apply and deepen their skills in reading and writing in independent activities outdoors
- governors adopt a more strategic approach to monitoring and evaluation so that they have a secure view of school improvement and can hold leaders to account
- teachers embed a secure approach to the teaching of phonics to improve outcomes for all pupils
- pupils are consistently challenged in reading to give high-quality responses that are written accurately
- leaders adopt a more strategic approach to managing and improving attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Cameron  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, the leaders for literacy and phonics, and the attendance officer. I met with a representative of the local authority and a member of the governing body. I also spoke to the chair of the governing body by telephone. Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the two responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including one written comment. I also considered the 78 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the single central record, your school self-evaluation and school improvement priorities, minutes of governing body meetings, and safeguarding information.

Inspectors visited classrooms with the deputy headteacher and looked at pupils' work in reading. We observed pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the school day, on the playground, in the dining room and in lessons.