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Mrs Jayne Bayliss
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Bayliss

Short inspection of Burnt Tree Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at that time.

You lead and manage the school very well. You and the deputy headteachers have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and check carefully on the quality of teaching and learning. During the inspection, leaders' views on the teaching that we observed accorded very well with mine. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and you use the results to provide additional teaching for those pupils at risk of falling behind. Leaders have introduced new ideas and procedures, wisely allowing teachers the time to implement them before taking stock. The school is well maintained and the staff have covered the corridors in displays that are both attractive and educative.

The governing body is effective. It has recently overseen your appointment as headteacher and amended the leadership structure. Governors understand well how to support leaders and to hold them to account. They have undertaken relevant training in different aspects of school leadership.

Leaders have an infectious enthusiasm for the craft of teaching. This contributes to a strong sense of teamwork within the school. There has been a recent tradition of appointing trainee teachers to permanent posts and of growing the skills of the staff so that they are well placed to take up leadership roles in the school. As the school has expanded, this process has aided recruitment and helped to provide a

consistency in expectations. At the same time, leaders are open to new ideas. Teachers visit other schools to check on teachers' judgements about pupils' work and to identify the best professional practice.

You set and maintain high standards for pupils and staff. Pupils wear their uniforms with pride, and unfailingly present their work to the best of their ability. They have a secure understanding of the school's rules and rewards. One girl explained to me how her ambition to attain bronze, silver and gold stars motivated her to sustain her full attendance. Conversely, pupils explained how good behaviour in the playground reflected a clear knowledge of the sanctions that would accompany any silliness.

In the classroom, pupils are dutiful and hard-working. During the inspection, I observed pupils promptly following classroom routines and there was no disruption to the teaching. Pupils attend school regularly and no group of pupils is disadvantaged by low attendance.

Children make a good start to the school. Many join the school speaking English as an additional language. Some have particular speech, language and communication difficulties. Children make good progress so that the proportion who attain a good level of development is in line with the national average. They learn at an early stage to work and play happily together.

Outcomes in the school have risen rapidly. In recent years, attainment at key stage 1 has been above the national average. At key stage 2, Year 6 pupils left the school in 2017 having made broadly average progress. However, in 2018, Year 6 had made progress in reading, writing and mathematics that was well above the national average. The progress of pupils with low and middle prior attainment was particularly impressive. Attainment was also above average at both the expected and the higher standard. Leaders' enduring focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their effective expenditure of the pupil premium have meant that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has recently kept pace with that of their peers. Inspection evidence showed that pupils across the school are making consistently strong progress in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and history.

The school's extensive survey of parental opinion showed that leaders enjoy parents' and carers' overwhelming support. Parents that I met spoke particularly highly of the contact and support that they had from the staff in the early years. You told me there was more to do to involve some parents fully in supporting their children's learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have made sure that staff are thoroughly trained to identify any problems that pupils may face and are alert to signs that they may not be safe. The school's records show that when a risk to pupils arises, leaders work effectively with parents to protect children. They involve other agencies when required and

persevere until they know that pupils' needs have been fully met.

Pupils told me that they feel entirely safe in school. Those that I spoke with were unaware of any bullying. Pupils were able to recall in good detail the advice that they have received on how to stay safe online. They spoke of learning about road safety and the school's attention to fire safety. The school is providing an extended programme of swimming lessons in Year 6 to address pupils' lack of confidence in the water.

Inspection findings

- The broad curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils told me that they enjoyed the range of subjects they studied, and mentioned in particular English, mathematics, science, French and religious education. Each autumn, you create a 'museum' of pupils' work to which you invite parents. Leaders have set out for teachers the specific knowledge and skills that pupils have to acquire, and teachers track pupils' progress in detail against these outcomes. Teaching often combines subjects in imaginative ways. For example, we looked at work in design and technology where pupils had designed and created Tudor purses, drawing on their historical knowledge. Most pupils take advantage of after-school sessions, which include opportunities to reinforce academic work and clubs for sports and artistic activities.
- Leaders' plans identify the need to build on pupils' conscientiousness so that they become more responsible for taking decisions about their own learning. Some pupils will benefit from a fuller understanding of the purpose of their studies and how they can contribute to their own success. Specifically, teachers encourage pupils to make their own selections from tasks representing varying degrees of difficulty. Although pupils generally choose well, with more confidence and self-assurance, their knowledge and understanding will develop still further.
- The school has addressed the issues raised in the previous inspection report through the redesign of its approach to teaching mathematics. Inspection evidence showed that pupils cover a good range of mathematical topics. They achieve fluency by practising their calculation skills and apply those skills in practical contexts. In lessons, pupils have the opportunity to discuss with each other their approaches to problems. They have access to a good range of mathematical equipment. Tasks in other subjects enable pupils to apply their mathematical skills in new ways.
- Pupils' workbooks showed that teaching in English encourages pupils to write in different forms for a variety of purposes. Pupils have the opportunity to review and edit their own work. Teachers pay explicit attention to widening pupils' vocabulary and to the use of the correct linguistic terms.
- In recent years, the most able key stage 2 pupils have not made the same progress as their peers. Inspection evidence showed that teachers set work for the most able current pupils that extends what they can already do and provides an appropriate degree of challenge. During the inspection, this was undoubtedly true in mathematics. However, during lessons and in pupils' workbooks, I saw few examples of tasks or questions that aroused their curiosity and made them

think really hard.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff continue in their efforts to encourage pupils to think about how they learn and to develop their self-confidence
- teachers set tasks more frequently for pupils – especially the most able – that require them to think deeply.

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

Martin Spoor
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders and governors. I also held informal conversations with other members of staff. I spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority. I observed teaching jointly with senior leaders, including the teaching of English, mathematics and French. I scrutinised pupils' work from the current academic year. I met with a group of pupils to gather their views, and spoke informally with several more. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I observed pupils' behaviour at social times and when they moved around the school.

There were insufficient responses to Parent View – Ofsted's online questionnaire – for me to take these views into account. However, I looked at an extensive survey of parental opinion that the school had conducted. I also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 47 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

I scrutinised a wide range of documents – both electronically and on paper – including: the school's evaluation of its performance and its plans for improvement; records of governors' meetings; a review of the school conducted by the local authority; policies; curriculum plans and records; and records of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour. I looked in detail at records that show how the school keeps pupils safe.