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Mr Craig Griffiths
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Dear Mr Griffiths

Short inspection of Cheslyn Hay Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 July 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.**

You and the recently formed leadership team have identified the school's strengths and what needs to improve. You have introduced lots of initiatives over the past two years to bring about a consistent approach to teaching and the checking of pupils' progress. As a result, staff are clear about leaders' expectations and have a better understanding of how well pupils are achieving. However, leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Plans do not focus precisely enough on the key priorities for improvement. They do not contain specific targets and measurable success criteria to support leaders and governors in evaluating the impact of their actions on improving teaching and pupils' learning. Teachers do not receive the feedback and support they need to improve their practice.

Leaders have developed an effective curriculum, which links subjects together and creates purposeful learning opportunities. This has helped to improve the content of pupils' writing because they have interesting facts and ideas to write about. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning in subjects such as history, geography and science. They have a good understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 4 were proud to explain technical terms such as 'gingivitis' and 'periodontitis' linked to their learning about teeth.

Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and cultures. Pupils say that this helps them to recognise ways in which people's beliefs are similar, as well as the differences between them. Pupils show high levels of tolerance and respect for others. This was captured by two pupils when they said, 'We all have our own opinions,' and 'Everyone is equal, you should treat them how you want to be treated.' Staff broaden pupils' experiences through trips and enrichment opportunities, for example theme days such as the 'Polar Express day', trips to the theatre and residential visits. Participation in after-school clubs is high.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to increase the level of challenge for pupils and check that pupils understand how to improve their work. In mathematics, you have introduced 'challenge up' activities to extend and deepen pupils' understanding. In some classes, these are effective, but this is not consistent across the school. Teachers encourage pupils to edit their own writing using purple pens. However, some teachers do not check to ensure that the changes pupils make are accurate. Too often, pupils are not clear about how to improve their writing. Leaders were also asked to check that additional adults support pupils' learning well in lessons. You have recently introduced a system to support the development of teaching assistants and to quality-assure their work. However, it is too soon to determine the effect of this.

Governors have not held leaders to account effectively for pupils' poor progress at the end of key stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics. They have not probed the reasons why pupils are not making the progress they should and have not looked at trends in pupils' outcomes over time. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent but their scrutiny of its impact lacks rigour. Governors have not ensured that statutory information relating to the spending of additional funding is available on the school's website.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Regular training for staff and support for families create a culture of care that is evident throughout the school. Staff understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. They know the signs to look for that might indicate that a child is at risk of harm and follow agreed procedures for reporting concerns. Leaders complete the appropriate checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. They follow robust procedures to check that pupils are safe when they are absent from school.

Pupils feel safe at school. They trust adults to listen to their worries and to help them if they are upset. One pupil said, 'All of the adults sort out every occasion.' Pupils are kind to one another and help each other to resolve problems through the peer mentor system. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agree that their children are safe at school.

Effective curriculum provision ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils know how to stay safe online, for example by blocking people they do not know, not sharing their personal details and not sharing photographs of themselves. They know to tell an adult if they see anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Pupils understand what bullying is and how it differs from 'falling out'. They know some of the different types of bullying that can occur, for example verbal, physical and cyber bullying. Pupils say that there is not much bullying at Cheslyn Hay. Almost all of the pupils who responded to Ofsted's online pupil survey say that when bullying does happen, staff deal with it well.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors have been too slow to respond to pupils' poor progress at the end of key stage 2. Although they have taken action to improve teaching, these actions have not been sufficiently focused on weaknesses in teachers' practice. This is because leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. Checks on teaching focus on compliance with school policies. Leaders do not evaluate the extent to which teaching supports pupils to make good progress. As a result, leaders think that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are better than they are.
- Teachers do not receive precise enough feedback about how to improve their practice. Leaders do not provide teachers with the training and support they need. As a result, not all teaching is effective, and pupils in key stage 2 continue to underachieve.
- Leaders hold half-termly pupil progress meetings with teachers. They have recently started to check if pupils are making the progress they should against their starting points. These meetings identify pupils who are falling behind, and staff put extra support in place to help them to catch up. Some of this support is effective, for example the morning 'pre-teach' sessions in mathematics, which boost pupils' confidence and enable teachers to address misconceptions successfully. However, the quality of teaching in lessons is not good enough to ensure that pupils make strong progress over time.
- Published information shows that middle-attaining pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been in the bottom 20% nationally for the past two years. High-attaining pupils' progress in writing has also been in the bottom 20% nationally in this period, and their progress in reading and mathematics fell into the bottom 20% nationally in 2018.
- Current middle- and high-attaining pupils in key stage 2 are not making the progress of which they are capable. This is because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what these pupils can achieve. In writing, lessons do not have a clear enough focus for learning. Teachers do not develop pupils' writing skills progressively over time. They do not consistently challenge pupils to use grammar and punctuation appropriate to their age and ability.
- In reading, books do not consistently match pupils' abilities; for example, they

are sometimes too difficult for middle-attaining pupils, which means that pupils struggle to read fluently. Pupils do not have a secure understanding of key vocabulary, which hinders their understanding of what they read.

- In mathematics, some teachers plan work that is suitably challenging for middle- and high-attaining pupils. Where this is the case, activities match pupils' abilities closely and there are regular opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge to reason and solve problems. In these classes, pupils make strong progress. However, this is not consistent across the school. In some classes, work does not match pupils' abilities closely enough. Activities do not build on pupils' prior learning effectively, which limits pupils' progress.
- Records show that leaders use exclusion proportionately and only as a last resort. Although historical data shows that the number of fixed-term exclusions was well above the national average in 2017, there have been no exclusions of any kind for the past 18 months.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. Pupils understand staff's expectations and respond well to these. Pupils I spoke to were certain that pupils behave well, emphasising that this is the case 'in and out of classrooms and out of school'. Pupils are clear about the reward and consequence system and value the opportunity to earn 'dojos' for good work and being 'on task'. During the inspection, pupils listened carefully in lessons and applied themselves productively to their work. They moved calmly and sensibly around school and were polite and courteous to adults and each other. This is reflected in school records, which show that incidents of low-level behaviour have reduced over the past 12 months.
- Leaders provide tailored support to improve the behaviour and attendance of vulnerable pupils. For example, they use the pupil premium funding effectively to fund initiatives such as the breakfast club and transport arrangements to ensure that pupils come to school every day and on time. This is helping to reduce the number of disadvantaged pupils who are frequently absent from school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement plans focus sharply on the most important priorities and contain measurable success criteria, so that leaders and governors can evaluate the impact of their actions on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
- governors hold leaders to account robustly for pupils' progress
- governors challenge leaders about the impact of the pupil premium funding on improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes more thoroughly, and publish statutory information about this funding on the school's website
- leaders have an accurate understanding of how well teaching supports pupils' learning and progress
- teachers receive the training and support they need to develop their practice, so that the quality and consistency of teaching improve

- work challenges middle- and high-attaining pupils sufficiently, so that these pupils make the progress of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Claire Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the two assistant headteachers and the leaders for reading and mathematics. I met with the chair of the governing body and two governors. I also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I observed pupils' learning in parts of nine lessons, six of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. I looked at pupils' work in lessons and examined pupils' English and mathematics books with senior leaders. I talked to pupils in lessons and met with a group of eight key stage 2 pupils. I also considered the 155 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire. I examined a range of documentation, including information relating to current pupils' attainment and progress and the school development plan. I also scrutinised a range of safeguarding documents, including behaviour and attendance records. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and reviewed one letter from a parent. I also took account of the 89 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 79 free-text comments. I considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.