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Mr Scott Smith
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Smith

Short inspection of Fairfield First 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 March 2015.

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.**

At the previous inspection, you were asked to provide work that is consistently challenging for pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and low and middle prior-attaining pupils are provided with work that is challenging most of the time. However, most-able pupils do not receive work that is challenging enough. As a result, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

You have taken action to ensure that leaders have detailed school improvement plans. This was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection. Consequently, leaders have a clearer understanding of the attainment of different groups of pupils. You have used this information to formulate plans for improvement. These plans are appropriately detailed and identify the most pressing priorities for the school.

Leaders and staff have implemented successful reading strategies in recent years. Pupils are motivated to read and a culture for reading is evident across the school. Your work in this area has had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 1. In 2018, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above the national average. By the end of key stage 1

in 2018, pupils achieved above the national average at the expected standard and at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.

You place a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils show positive attitudes to learning and are considerate and caring towards each other. As a result, pupils are well behaved, courteous and kind. Pupils say that they feel safe and are confident that teachers and other staff will sort out any problems that they have.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths but are also realistic about the need for further improvement. They have been proactive in visiting the school. For example, link governors regularly meet with key staff and conduct learning walks with them to monitor and evaluate improvements outlined in the school development plan.

Another area for improvement from the previous inspection was to improve pupils' presentation, as it was not consistently of the highest quality. This has been addressed, because pupils now take pride and care in their work. As a result, presentation is of a high standard.

The school offers a variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities such as physical education tuition and visits. Outdoor woodland education provision is accessed by pupils as part of the school's broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities and are keen competitors. Pupils confirm that they enjoy taking part in sport and physical education activities and recognise the important contribution this makes to developing a healthy lifestyle.

All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, indicated that they would recommend the school to another parent. The comments on free-text that school staff are 'caring' and 'supportive' were typical of the views of many parents.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Despite some lapses in safeguarding procedures and paperwork, teaching staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of how to keep children safe. They know who to talk to if they have concerns. Systems to ensure that pupils are safe and protected in school meet requirements. The school site is secure and appropriate checks are carried out on visitors. Leaders undertake the necessary background checks on staff employed by the school. Pupils feel safe in all parts of the school. They explained that any name-calling or unkind behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils play well together, respect each other and follow the school rules. All parents who responded to the survey agreed that the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- My first focus area was the level of challenge provided for the most able pupils. Leaders have taken actions to improve outcomes in mathematics for the most able

girls. All teachers have undertaken training to support them in providing increased challenge for most-able pupils. Work in mathematics books shows that pupils are given more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in problem-solving using reasoning. Despite this, teachers do not routinely ensure that the tasks they set for pupils are sufficiently well matched to the pupils' abilities, especially those of the most able pupils. Pupils spoken to during the inspection commented that at times they find that the work they undertake is too easy.

- The second area I looked at was the extent to which leaders have taken actions to improve outcomes in writing for the most able boys. All teachers have been provided with training to support them in providing increased challenge for the most able pupils by using different questioning techniques. Despite this, teachers do not ensure that the writing tasks they set for pupils are sufficiently well matched to their abilities, especially those of the most able pupils.
- Next, I looked at the work of Reception children to check that work was well matched to individual needs. Teachers do not consistently ensure that learning activities are sufficiently well matched to the needs of Reception children. As a result, children do not make as much progress in writing as they could from their starting points in the early years.
- Another area I looked at was the school's website, which is bright and colourful. However, it does not meet the current guidelines set out by the Department for Education. For example, it does not comply with publishing the required content for safeguarding information, pupil premium funding or the physical education and sport premium.
- Finally, I looked at the extent to which leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have their individual needs met. The low numbers of pupils with SEND make good progress from their individual starting points. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) undertakes monitoring and evaluation activities alongside senior leaders to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for pupils with SEND. Additional adults support well any pupils with SEND in lessons, and this helps them to learn. The SENCo also ensures that pupils receive personalised plans to support their individual needs before they arrive in school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- systems and procedures for record-keeping and monitoring safeguarding incidents are rigorous and up to date
- the most able pupils are provided with a consistent level of challenge in mathematics and writing
- teaching and learning of writing in Reception is more closely matched to children's needs and abilities
- the school's website is compliant and is checked regularly so that it remains compliant.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Titchener
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher and SENCo. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I considered the 65 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and reviewed the 64 free-text comments from parents. Together with you, I visited seven lessons to observe learning. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime and observed their behaviour at playtime and lunchtime on the playground.

I scrutinised information about pupils' progress. I considered other documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies and checks on staff employed at the school, and checked the school's website. I also analysed the range of views expressed by the 10 staff and 58 pupils who responded to Ofsted's questionnaires about the school.