

6 March 2019

Mrs Helen Wallace and Miss Nicola Peck
Headteachers
Chawson First School
Wych Road
Droitwich
Worcestershire
WR9 8BW

Dear Mrs Wallace and Miss Peck

Short inspection of Chawson First School

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 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 February 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are committed to the school and are well respected for the work you undertake. Leaders and governors have worked to make sure that the school has continued to move forward. Pupils benefit from effective teaching in a friendly, happy and supportive atmosphere. You have enhanced the skills of the leadership team and make sure they have the support to lead their subject areas well. Staff are proud to be members of the school. Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, said their children make good progress and are taught well in the school. One parent echoed the views of many when she said: 'Chawson is a fabulous learning environment. The staff are amazing at what they do. I couldn't think of a better school.'

Leaders and governors have a secure understanding of what is working well and know where further work is needed. The school self-evaluation is accurate and, as a result, the key lines of enquiry for this inspection and the resulting areas of improvement came as no surprise to you.

Leaders have tackled effectively the areas for improvement at the last inspection. Pupils know what is expected of them. This is demonstrated in their independence when undertaking activities and their good learning behaviours. They know their individual targets and how to achieve them. Although there was a dip to below the national average in the Year 2 assessments in 2018, you quickly identified the

reasons for this. Current assessments and work in pupils' books show that pupils are building well on their prior attainment and making good progress.

Governors have a clear sense of purpose. They have a wide range of skills and are supportive of the work you do. Governors ask pertinent and challenging questions. They test out your assertions about the strengths and priorities of the school by visiting lessons, meeting with staff and talking to pupils. In this way, governors have a clear and accurate view of how well the school is doing.

Staff are good role models for pupils. They help create a caring community. Pupils behave well in the school both in lessons and at breaktimes. This was confirmed by my conversations with pupils, and by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View. The pupils I saw in lessons during the inspection were keen to participate and confident to talk to me about their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils' well-being is a priority. Staff understand and follow the school's procedures to keep pupils safe. You work closely with external agencies and are quick to challenge agencies where necessary. This ensures that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

All necessary checks on the suitability of staff, volunteers, contractors and governors are carried out and recorded appropriately. Recruitment processes are in line with safer recruitment procedures.

Staff know pupils well and are quick to help them overcome personal difficulties. Pupils are well supported because the school provides good pastoral care. Pupils said that they feel safe and they know how to keep themselves safe. Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View said that their children feel safe and are well looked after. Pupils told the inspector that bullying rarely happens and are confident that teachers would deal with incidents well. In addition, the school's curriculum helps pupils develop a good understanding of being safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to check how well you are improving teaching in the early years. This is because, over time, too few pupils achieve what is typical for their age by the end of the Reception Year. The majority of children begin the early years with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age, especially in writing, reading, language and social skills. Some pupils join the school with skills that are well below those typical for their age and have additional needs.
- Teachers in the early years have a clear understanding of children's specific needs and interests and plan learning accordingly. For example, children are well supported to develop their communication, writing and social skills. During the inspection, I saw pupils independently undertaking a range of writing activities

inspired by their topic on the Chinese New Year. The effective teaching of phonics enables children to identify letters and to sound them out while forming and writing letters. In the early years, teachers provide stimulating and varied indoor and outdoor activities. These encourage children to talk, role-play and experiment with practical resources to improve their language and mathematics skills. As a result, most children in the early years make effective progress from their low starting points. However, some children need more time to catch up, particularly in writing and literacy skills.

- I wanted to find out about the quality of teaching in key stage 1. This is because in 2018 attainment at the end of key stage 1 dipped to below the national averages at the expected standard. I saw convincing information to explain the reasons for this. Some pupils need to catch up with the basic skills they need in order to make progress. To address this, leaders carefully assess the gaps in pupils' learning and put in place support and interventions that will allow these pupils to make good progress. The impact of this support is regularly reviewed, and interventions are changed if they are not working well enough. Current assessments and work in pupils' books show that pupils are making good progress, building well on their prior attainment.
- I also wanted to find out how well leaders and managers are demonstrating the capacity to drive improvement. You provide effective leadership, ably supported by other leaders. Leaders' views on the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils are accurate. Leaders provide staff with clear guidance on how to improve their practice. Leaders' analysis notes the impact that teaching is having on outcomes for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school's assessment information and work in pupils' books indicate that the majority of current pupils are making good progress in both English and mathematics. Leaders and staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils have a secure grasp of arithmetic and calculation methods. A range of mathematical resources has been introduced, which helps pupils to demonstrate mathematical concepts in practical ways. Leaders have identified that the next step is to ensure that teaching develops pupils' reasoning skills to explain and depict how they reach their answers.
- You have appointed a member of staff to take responsibility for disadvantaged pupils. Targeted help for these pupils has been provided and the school's evidence indicates that these strategies have increased the progress of most disadvantaged pupils. Inspection evidence confirmed this. Often, disadvantaged pupils who join the school have additional needs. Staff prioritise the social and behaviour needs of these pupils, and evidence indicates how, in time, this has led to improvements in pupils' academic progress. However, disadvantaged pupils who enter the school with well-below-average starting points need to make rapid progress in order to reach the expected standard. Careful and regular procedures to check and follow up absence have resulted in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improving.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in the early years enables children who start school with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age to make rapid progress, especially in writing, reading, language and social skills
- teaching continues to promote the development of reasoning skills in mathematics
- well-planned interventions continue to help disadvantaged pupils to make strong progress so they catch up.

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

Sarah Somers
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the two headteachers and other leaders, and six governors. I had a telephone call with a representative from the local authority. I observed pupils' learning in lessons and looked at examples of pupils' work. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with other pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents including those relating to safeguarding, the school's development plan, the school's own evaluation of its performance and records of checks made on the suitability of staff to work with children. I took account of the 65 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.