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8 April 2019

Mrs Alison Carter  
Headteacher  
Longwill A Primary School for Deaf Children  
Bell Hill  
Northfield  
Birmingham  
B31 1LD

Dear Mrs Carter

### **Short inspection of Longwill A Primary School for Deaf Children**

Following my visit to the school on 28 March 2019 with Ofsted Inspectors Susan Hickerton and Jo Owen, 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 September 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

The school is very well led and managed. You, leaders and governors use your clear understanding of the quality of education you provide to address any areas for development you identify. You ensure that this knowledge is used to continue to improve the school. Leaders have effectively tackled the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Leadership is strong at all levels. All staff are coached and encouraged to develop their practice and leadership skills. As they benefit from a range of professional development opportunities, staff are highly motivated, professional and effective. Training records are checked regularly to ensure that staff receive appropriate training to enable them to continue to deliver high-quality learning experiences to all pupils.

The school has a positive and inclusive culture based around a strong sign-bilingual philosophy. Pupils are confident, polite, respectful and friendly. Older pupils take care of younger children and the rights of children and pupils are at the heart of a tailored and appropriate curriculum.

Teaching is strong. Staff model the good use of spoken and written English and take regular opportunities to extend pupils' use of English in a range of subjects. Leaders and teachers prioritise language development for deaf children and so every lesson is a language lesson. Explicit and purposeful teaching of vocabulary across the curriculum enables pupils to further develop their skills and understanding. Staff use written and spoken English, visual prompts and British Sign Language (BSL) well together to develop pupils' communication skills. The bespoke language teaching for deaf pupils that is used in the school is helping pupils make sustained progress across the curriculum.

Children in the early years setting make substantial progress from their different starting points. They are provided with many opportunities to develop their early reading and writing skills, and visual phonics by hand is used well to develop pupils' reading skills throughout the school. Pupils make strong progress in every key stage.

Teachers adhere to the school's marking policy and give pupils a great deal of useful immediate feedback. Pupils respond positively to the feedback that they receive to improve their work.

Parents and carers are full of praise for the school. They comment on how well staff support their children in a 'warm, inclusive, family environment'. They also commend the 'unbelievable education' that helps their children develop academically, socially and emotionally. Parents told us that the school helps pupils to be 'proud to be deaf'.

Staff communicate well with parents. The school's high-quality and up-to-date website contains useful information in an accessible format. Parents attend school events, and many have taken the opportunity to learn BSL at the school. Parents and staff work well together for the benefit of the children and pupils. For example, the vast majority of parents have fully supported the school's drive to continue to improve attendance. However, a very small number do not ensure that their children always attend school when they are well enough to do so.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe throughout the school. Safeguarding is regarded as 'the golden thread' that runs through all aspects of school life. Keeping pupils safe is seen as everyone's responsibility.

Staff are well trained and kept up to date about safeguarding matters. Processes for reporting concerns are clear, referrals are timely and appropriate action is taken if required. Leaders and staff have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities and they follow up issues tenaciously.

Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to help to protect pupils. Pupils are taught how to stay safe. For example, they learn about safety at home,

healthy relationships and how to stay safe online. Pupils, staff and parents who made their views known during the inspection believe that pupils are safe in school.

Records are stored securely and the maintenance of the single central record of recruitment meets requirements. Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors. Thorough safeguarding procedures are in place.

### **Inspection findings**

- Teaching is strong. Staff have high expectations of all pupils and plan activities that help them make considerable progress from their different starting points. Pupils are keen to learn and behave very well in class. Staff work productively together and use questions effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge. Outdoor learning complements classroom-based activities exceptionally well.
- Pupils progress well in every key stage. They make substantial progress in a range of subjects, and achievement in English, particularly in writing, has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Leaders and staff monitor pupils' progress closely and take effective action to help pupils improve their progress when required. For example, further strategies are now in place to help the most able pupils excel in all areas of the curriculum. However, as approaches are not yet systematic and consistently implemented, they have not had their full impact.
- The school is calm and orderly. Established routines and positive relationships help pupils to behave well. Staff manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. They use de-escalation techniques well and support those pupils who find it more difficult to manage their own behaviour to improve their conduct. Positive behaviour is rewarded. As a result, incidents of inappropriate behaviour have reduced, fixed-term exclusions are very rare and there have been no permanent exclusions since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and staff have ensured that there is a clear focus on improving pupils' attendance. Pupils who attend regularly, and those whose attendance is improving, are rewarded. Absence is followed up thoroughly. As a result, some individuals have much better attendance than they did in the past and overall absence rates are declining. Over time, when genuine illness and medical appointments are discounted from the figures, attendance rates are similar to the national average for all primary schools.
- Many pupils have excellent attendance and almost all attend school when they are able. However, a few parents do not ensure that their children always attend school when they are well enough to do so.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they take further action to fully embed strategies to improve the progress

made by the most able pupils so that they excel in all subjects

- they take further action to work with parents to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are absent without good reason.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Mosley  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and other staff. We also considered the eight responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 18 returns of the school's recent survey of staff based on the Ofsted questionnaire.

I met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. I also spoke by telephone to a consultant who works with school leaders and a representative of the organisation commissioned by the local authority to support school improvement.

We made short visits to every classroom. We looked at children's and pupils' work and spoke to them formally and informally. Behaviour was observed in lessons and during social times.

We considered the four free-text comments to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the three emails sent to me, and spoke to three parents during the inspection. There were not enough responses to Parent View for the results to be analysed.

Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and we looked at published information on the school's website.