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8 April 2019

Mr Mark Whyman  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Whyman

### **Short inspection of Sudbury Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 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 2016.

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.**

Sudbury Primary is a welcoming and vibrant school where there is a real sense of community. Pupils that I met with spoke enthusiastically about attending, commenting, 'It is a small school and everyone is caring'. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They are eager to discuss the opportunities that staff offer to enrich their curriculum, such as trips to museums and residential visits. Many parents whom I met commented that the school was 'brilliant'. The parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, were very positive about the work of the school, with the vast majority believing that their child was happy there.

You have accurately identified the school's areas of strength and those that require further development. Attainment in 2018 in writing at the end of key stage 2 and in all areas at the end of key stage 1 was significantly below the national average. While recognising the impact small cohorts have on data, you accept that the pupils of Sudbury can achieve far more. As a result, your school priorities focus on improving pupils' progress in writing and increasing attainment at the end of early years and key stage 1. However, the school's development planning does not identify clearly the series of smaller actions needed to bring about change. Leaders over time have not checked well enough if the actions have been embedded across the school sufficiently quickly.

Like you, the governing body has high aspirations for pupils. While governors are supportive of both you and of staff, they challenge you to improve further. Governors' regular monitoring means that they are very knowledgeable about the school. Nonetheless, the school's priorities have not been addressed quickly enough. You and the governing body are putting in place a strategy to address this.

At the time of the previous inspection, the inspector asked leaders to ensure that the school website was updated and provided the information the Department for Education requires schools to publish online. You have attended to this. Leaders were also asked to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures. Work scrutiny and discussions with pupils clearly showed that they have a strong understanding of and respect towards the beliefs of others. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their learning in religious education and school assemblies.

The previous inspection report also asked you to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, were challenged consistently in mathematics and to improve their vocabulary in writing. You have provided staff training in these areas and further support for teachers by collaborating with another local school.

You have introduced new initiatives in the teaching of writing, such as the 'checklist' of the features that pupils should include when they write. Pupils are writing for sustained periods far more frequently. Writing themes are provided for them to give them a context for their writing. However, the scrutiny of work we undertook together and the lessons we observed show that improvements are not fully embedded across all classes. Not all teachers develop pupils' writing skills effectively. They do not consistently demonstrate well the techniques that pupils need to use when they write. This leads to some pupils not being able to include these features in their writing and them becoming confused. In several of the lessons that we visited, teachers did not use their prior knowledge and assessment information to move pupils' learning on. For example, in one classroom, pupils' work displayed on the wall demonstrated that pupils were far more capable than the expectation of the task they were set.

Pupils are not consistently given work that meets their needs in mathematics. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils in both key stage 1 and the early years. Often, the most able complete their learning with ease and have to wait for their peers. In some lessons, these pupils are set 'holding tasks' where they wait, completing undemanding activities, until other pupils catch up. In key stage 1 and the early years, pupils and children do not have enough opportunities to use practical mathematics. You have provided training for staff so that they can do this more effectively.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Pupils feel safe and parents share the view that pupils are kept safe. Staff are knowledgeable about their

safeguarding role through the effective training that they have received. They are fully aware of the warning signs of abuse and know how to raise their concerns with the designated safeguarding leads. Any concerns raised are dealt with efficiently by leaders in a timely manner. The school works effectively with other agencies and families to secure the best possible outcomes for the child. The chair of the governing body is fully aware of her role in safeguarding and rigorously monitors this area.

Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour and are insistent that there are no incidents of bullying at the school. Pupils participate well in lessons. They are articulate and confident, and there is a positive behaviour culture throughout the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Attainment in mathematics for the past two years has been above the national average at the end of key stage 2. However, at the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard has been well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. For the past three years, no pupil in key stage 1 has achieved a greater depth of understanding in mathematics.
- While the school is improving, not all actions are taking place with sufficient speed. Leaders do not consistently make clear to the governing body the steps they will take to address areas of weakness or ensure that actions are implemented briskly. Actions are not always monitored sufficiently by leaders to ensure that teachers have changed how they teach over the long term.
- Staff are unsure about how to assess what pupils know and, as a result, do not always choose appropriately tasks that will move pupils' learning on. This results in some pupils being given work that does not challenge them sufficiently, while others have tasks that are too difficult.
- Teachers do not routinely make it clear to all pupils how they should improve their writing. They do not demonstrate sufficiently well to pupils how to write for different purposes and audiences. As a result, pupils do not make consistently strong progress.
- The teaching of mathematics overall is improving because teachers are giving pupils more opportunities for practical activities which improve their confidence, such as solving number problems in Year 1. However, this is not yet occurring regularly and consistently well across the school.
- Teaching in the early years is improving. Staff have collaborated with colleagues in another school to improve their skills. Children access all aspects of the early years curriculum through well-planned and engaging learning opportunities. Children participate well in their learning. The school's assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils who are currently on track to attain a good level of development at the end of the early years is set to increase, compared with 2018.

- The school website contains good levels of information for parents. For example, there is clear information about the school's curriculum.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school improvement actions are implemented sufficiently quickly, to bring about the improvements that leaders want to see
- school improvement actions are monitored rigorously and frequently to evaluate the impact intended and any inconsistencies in teaching are eliminated
- staff assess pupils effectively and plan next steps that are sufficiently challenging and meet the learning needs of all pupils, particularly in English and mathematics
- staff demonstrate correctly the techniques of writing that pupils need to use, so they know how to improve their work.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Stewart  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, members of the governing body and the representative from the local education authority. I met with a group of pupils from across the school and spoke with parents early in the school day. I considered the views of 84 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. We jointly conducted a scrutiny of pupils' workbooks from early years to Year 6 across a wide range of subjects studied. Together, we also completed lesson observations across the school from early years to Year 6 in writing and mathematics. I evaluated a range of documents, including leaders' development planning, safeguarding records and other policies.