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8 July 2019

Mr Matthew Brookes  
Executive Headteacher  
Ashby Willesley Primary School  
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Leicestershire  
LE65 2QG

Dear Mr Brookes

### **Short inspection of Ashby Willesley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2012

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last 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.

You and your leadership team have determinedly tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders know the school well, and you demonstrated an accurate evaluation of the school's many strengths and those areas where improvements can be made. You have worked effectively to develop leadership throughout the school and, as a result, senior leaders and subject leaders provide you with excellent support. They are highly motivated and have an incisive knowledge of the school's work and where it can be even better. They check the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning, and the impact of their actions. This has helped to improve pupils' outcomes since the last inspection.

Pupils work very hard and with very positive attitudes. They respect each other's ideas and work well together. They take pride in their learning and produce work of a high standard. The school fosters a purposeful and positive learning environment, where pupils are overwhelmingly polite and well-mannered. One pupil from key stage 2 told me: 'I have only just moved to the school but everyone has been really kind to me.' Governors, similarly, share a strong sense of pride about the school. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths, its context, and those areas

where they can challenge the school to improve further.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes by the end of key stage 2 demonstrate a sustained upward trend, particularly in reading and writing. Pupils' progress is generally strong throughout the school. By the end of key stages 1 and 2, their attainment is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1 in 2018 was high. In the early years, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has been sustained and demonstrates a consistent improvement over time.

You have identified the school's main strengths and those areas that could be further developed. For example, you know that most-able pupils could achieve even more in their work across the curriculum, and this is a focus for the school. Your judgements have been informed by a robust evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as thorough scrutiny of pupils' work. As a result, staff and governors are clear about how the school can improve further, and leaders are taking the right actions to make these improvements.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Regular briefings for staff and governors ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of the school's work. Staff are clear how to alert leaders to any concerns that they have and referrals are made in a timely manner. Staff training, including that related to the 'Prevent' duty, is up to date. Staff have a good knowledge of potential concerns within the local area. Records are comprehensive and well-organised. Leaders work very well with external agencies and families to ensure that pupils receive well-targeted support when required.

The school has a very friendly atmosphere and pupils appreciate this. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school and that bullying is not a problem. They enjoy coming to school and told me that they find the staff both helpful and respectful. This helps pupils to behave well and to have positive attitudes about school. Pupils show respect and have highly caring attitudes towards each other, staff and visitors. They work exceptionally well together to discuss and share their learning. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and, as a result, pupils thrive in this school.

Most parents appreciate the work that the school does to keep them well informed about their children's progress. Parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe and happy at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- An area that I explored during the inspection was how leaders and governors had sustained a good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. This was chosen because, over time, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 has shown

marked improvements.

- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and are ably supported by teaching assistants. For example, the skilful questioning in a Year 4 lesson, from teachers and teaching assistants, enabled the pupils to articulate differences between vertebrates and invertebrates and deepen their understanding of scientific classification. However, you are not complacent and are striving to ensure that the proportions of pupils reaching a higher standard increase in all subjects.
- Leaders and staff share extensive training and best practice across the school, the academy trust and locally. The strong direction from the academy trust and the challenge from governors have resulted in a school which is constantly reflecting on its own work and on where it can improve further.
- The next key line of enquiry was to find out how leaders ensure that pupils progress towards strong and meaningful outcomes. We decided on this as you had identified it as a strength of the school. I visited classrooms, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils to ascertain if this was the case.
- Your well-designed curriculum inspires and motivates pupils to learn and deepens their knowledge and understanding. Strong links exist between subjects, which enable pupils to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned. For example, in Year 3, pupils, who were learning about the Ancient Egyptians, were drying out tomatoes by scooping out the insides, to gain a greater grasp of preservation and mummification.
- During the inspection, I saw information about how you monitor the quality of teaching. Leaders' useful feedback to teachers provides them with information so that outcomes have shown substantial improvement. The work that you have done to improve outcomes needs to remain a focus so that the most able pupils are routinely provided with extra challenge.
- As part of this inspection, I also explored why standards in mathematics for the middle ability pupils – though broadly average – were not as high as for other pupils. You acknowledged that improving the quality of teaching and learning of mathematics was now a priority in your current school improvement plan. Skilful questioning by teachers and teaching assistants helps pupils to deepen their understanding of mathematics and to apply their skills in solving problems. For example, in Year 2, I noticed that pupils are very accustomed to answering questions such as 'How do you know?' The teacher with responsibility for overseeing improvements in mathematics has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in how the subject is taught and has a strong determination to raise standards further.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the quality of learning and teaching, to make sure that there is sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Leicestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Damien Turrell  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

In advance of this inspection, I examined the school's published performance data, looked at the school's website and read some of the policies and improvement plans. I met with you, your acting head of school, and the school's business manager. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school. I listened to readers from key stage 1 and key stage 2. I took account of 101 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View. I considered 15 responses to the staff survey as well as 79 responses to the pupils' survey.