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Mrs Lynnette Holden-Gough
Caslon Primary Community School
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Dear Mrs Holden-Gough

Short inspection of Caslon Primary Community School

Following my visit to the school on 16 July 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 April 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 have only been at the school for 18 months. In that time, you have kept a successful focus on the school's ethos: 'Inspiring achievement, today and tomorrow together.' You have brought this about by raising staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve both academically and in preparation for their future lives. You have continued to make sure that pupils benefit from a broad and well-considered curriculum underpinned by a wide range of educational visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. You are ambitious for pupils to develop the many skills and abilities needed to fulfil the school's mission statement of 'developing pupils' twenty-first century skills'.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and behaviour is good. Pupils are confident learners who are well equipped for lessons and settle quickly to their work. Pupils said that their teachers help them to learn and expect them to think hard in lessons. They have thoroughly enjoyed learning about effective approaches to recycling to save the planet. In lessons, we saw hard-working pupils engaged in learning because of the very interesting topics that they are studying. Your approach to undertaking whole-school topics such as learning about the First World War has sparked interest in Year 4 pupils to write poems and prayers about forgiveness.

Teachers are respected by pupils, and relationships throughout the school are very warm and enabling. As members of a UNICEF Rights Respecting School, pupils accept one another's differences. Teachers' support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates all that the school does. Pupils are

prepared well for life in modern Britain because staff promote and demonstrate British values across the school.

Work in pupils' workbooks, learning in lessons and your monitoring of teaching and learning show that pupils continue to make good progress and standards are rising across the curriculum. These outcomes are testament to your core belief of putting children at the centre of everything that you do. You are relentless in aiming to give pupils the highest quality of teaching and learning, so that they can improve their life chances. In writing, nearly all pupils attain the expected standard, but some of the most able pupils are not attaining the higher standards of which they are capable.

In a short time, you have made many changes that are benefiting the pupils in your care. You have introduced accurate monitoring systems of pupils' progress, and have trained teachers in acquiring the skills and knowledge required to help pupils achieve well. You have made changes to timetables to maximise learning time, reviewed curriculum planning and ensured that subjects are well resourced.

The pace of change has been fast. Generally, parents and carers are positive about the school's work. Nevertheless, some parents are not yet comfortable about these changes. Their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as some of their free-text comments, were not positive about the leadership of the school. You and the governors are aware of this. Plans are in place for the new academic year to improve communication with parents.

At the time of the last inspection, the leadership was asked to challenge the most able pupils across the school in reading, writing and mathematics and to improve spelling and the presentation of pupils' work. In response, you provided training for staff on the skills and knowledge needed for the most able pupils to reach higher standards. This has had a positive impact on reading and mathematics, but less so in writing, where in both key stages, most-able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged. You are continuing to work on spelling and the presentation of pupils' written work and these are improving.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and well maintained. The checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough and up to date. All school staff receive timely and high-quality training, to ensure that they are confident in applying the school's policies and guidance in child protection matters including sexual exploitation.

The vast majority of parents responding to Parent View say that they know that their children are safe and well looked after. However, some parents said that the school does not deal effectively with bullying. School records show that all incidents are carefully logged and thoroughly followed up. Pupils said that bullying is rare, and should it occur, trusted adults would deal with it effectively.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. This is seen in displays on issues pertaining to pupils' keeping safe. Messages about safe behaviour, including on name-calling and bullying, are regularly discussed in assemblies. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to understand how to stay safe when using the internet, and staff ensure that pupils are alert to issues relating to extremism and radicalisation.

Inspection findings

- Pupils continue to make sustained progress across the curriculum. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks shows that a greater proportion of pupils are attaining age-related expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Work in pupils' workbooks and teacher assessments show that outcomes in science have improved this year, and all groups of pupils are making secure progress. By the time pupils leave school, they have gained secure knowledge of evolution and inheritance, the circulatory system, food chains, electricity, and forces. We noticed, when looking at workbooks, that with the exception of Year 2 pupils, they have not had sufficient opportunities to learn about science experimentation.
- Standards in English grammar, punctuation and spelling have improved this year as a result of a tighter focus being placed upon the specific teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling. An increased number of pupils are now working at the higher standard. Nevertheless, there are still some missed opportunities to challenge the most able pupils in writing in both key stages.
- In key stage 1, attainment is continuing to improve for all groups of pupils in reading and mathematics. However, the most able pupils are not making enough progress in writing. Pupils are making secure progress in reading and have good skills of comprehension. They can understand unfamiliar text and enjoy reading. In mathematics, a high number of pupils are working at greater depth because of a newly implemented scheme, and the training given to staff by the subject leader is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. We saw teachers helping pupils develop fluency and reasoning in mathematics by giving all groups of pupils plenty of opportunities to re-visit what they have learned.
- The effective teaching of phonics has ensured that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are keen readers and have secure skills of breaking down unfamiliar words and understanding what they have read. Pupils read widely in other subjects, such as science, where they read biographies of famous scientists. However, we saw pupils in Year 1, who last year in early years did not attain a good level of development in writing, struggling to form their letters correctly. This had an impact on their ability to spell some key words correctly.
- Last year's early years cohort had a high proportion of boys with low starting points. While these pupils narrowly missed attaining the early learning goals, they made good progress in relation to their starting points. Currently, boys in early years are making good progress. They are attaining similar standards for children of their age nationally in all areas of learning other than writing, where they do not have enough chances to form their letters correctly.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who need help in managing their behaviour have been expertly supported to become successful

learners. These pupils have been provided with strategies to think through and understand the consequences of their actions. This has had a positive influence on helping them to manage their behaviour. Staff and the special educational needs coordinator have sought advice from outside agencies that helps identify barriers to learning, and strategies that can be implemented to support these pupils in lessons. You have successfully integrated pupils who have been excluded from other schools. They thrive under your care and make good progress. Parents are very pleased with the support that their children have received.

- Attendance has improved to the national average and persistent absence has been reduced, because you have secure procedures in place, such as first-day calling and ensuring that parents are informed of the thorough processes for follow-up if their children cannot attend school. You and your staff do everything that you can to ensure that pupils attend regularly. You have secure systems in place to re-integrate pupils who have been absent from school for extended periods of time. Your approach to understanding pupils' individual needs is at the core of your staff's teaching approaches.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers help children in early years and Year 1 form their letters correctly and spell key words correctly
- pupils have more opportunities to carry out scientific experiments
- the most able pupils are more effectively challenged to reach the higher standard in writing
- communication with parents is improved, so that they understand that the changes made are for the benefit of the pupils' learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Dr Bogusia Matusiak-Varley
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, and your senior leadership team, including the teachers responsible for leading literacy and mathematics. I met with the chair of governors and the governor responsible for safeguarding. I spoke with a group of

Year 2 and Year 5 pupils, I listened to some pupils read, and observed teaching with you in every class, except Year 6 as they had gone out on a trip.

I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, pupils' assessment information, a range of policies and your evaluation as to how well the school is performing. I undertook a review of the school's website. I considered 53 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaires and 15 parental responses to Ofsted's free-text service. There were no responses to Ofsted's staff or pupil questionnaires. I considered the school's in-house questionnaires for staff.