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Dear Mrs Horsley

Short inspection of Palterton Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 2017, 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 June 2013.

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 ensured that the four core Palterton values of 'Respect, Innovation, Challenge and Happiness' are evident in all aspects of the school's work and create a 'RICH' environment where pupils thrive. You ensure that all staff receive appropriate training. Consequently, pupils receive the support they need in order to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

You and your senior teacher have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, you quickly identified the reasons why pupils' key stage 2 outcomes in 2016 were untypically below national levels in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of your swift actions there are now large proportions of current pupils across all year groups who are making the progress that they should in reading, writing and mathematics. You have accurately identified that the proportions of pupils working at a greater depth across the school need to increase. You are taking actions to resolve this.

Over recent years, standards in early years, the Year 1 phonics screening check and at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics have been broadly in line with, and in some cases above, national standards.

At the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that pupils are fully involved in

their learning, that teachers' marking gives clear guidance on how pupils could improve their work and that pupils' work in books is well organised and presented. You have successfully addressed these issues. During my tour of the school, it was evident that pupils are fully engaged in their learning. They talk knowledgeably and confidently about their work and how teachers' marking helps them to improve. The standard of presentation of work, especially in the Year 6 writing books, was high. Inspectors also asked the school to develop the knowledge and skills of subject leaders and to ensure that governors rigorously checked the work of the school through visits that were focused on school improvement priorities. It has been difficult for you to develop the subject leaders due to staffing absences. However, the governors have fully embraced visiting the school and holding senior leaders to account. For example, recent governor training on examining pupil outcomes has led to a much better understanding of where the school is performing well and where it could improve even further.

Teachers update pupil assessments every four weeks. You regularly check on the progress that pupils make in their learning through half-termly pupil progress meetings and 'achievement teams'. These ensure that any pupil who is falling behind quickly receives the help that they need in order to catch up.

You make frequent visits to classrooms to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is at least good throughout the school. Teachers are given opportunities to work alongside colleagues from other schools to moderate pupils' work. This ensures that the assessment judgements made in writing and mathematics are accurate and secure.

Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Staff know pupils and their families well. There is a caring ethos in the school and pupils told me that they feel safe and well looked after. Incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are extremely rare and pupils are confident that staff will rectify any issues that may occur, quickly and fairly. Pupils enjoy being rewarded for good behaviour and work through being awarded 'Paltons'. Pupils save these and are then able to buy items every half term at the school shop.

Pupils are polite and look smart in their uniforms. They are respectful of each other and of adults. I spoke with a number of pupils throughout the day who unanimously said that they enjoy school and that they could not think of how it could be improved. Pupils are appreciative of the opportunity to undertake educational visits including the residential visit to White Hall Outdoor Education Centre enjoyed by pupils from Years 2 to 6. Examples of other educational visits include the Year 5/6 pupils who developed their knowledge and understanding of the Anglo-Saxons with a visit to Dudley Museum and the Reception and Year 1/2 pupils who deepened their science skills by visiting 'Eureka!' Pupils enjoy the opportunity to broaden their experience by welcoming many visitors to the school. These visitors include a cricketer, an artist, an African dancer and the local MP.

Children in the early years receive a good start to their primary education. During my visit, the children were engaged in creating a 'dragon stew' by counting out the

various ingredients. They listened well to the teacher's instructions and took turns maturely. Children are encouraged to be independent when completing the stimulating activities that are set up for them, both inside and outside the classroom. Staff make timely assessments to ensure that the next steps in learning are planned for carefully. Recent moderation with another school ensures that these assessments are accurate.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have strong procedures in place for the recording and monitoring of any safeguarding concerns that staff may have regarding pupils' safety and welfare. The records you keep are appropriate and clearly show that swift action is taken should the need for an outside agency be required. Consequently, pupils and their families receive support quickly should it be required.

All relevant pre-employment checks made on new staff members are rigorous and recorded clearly on the single central record. Staff and governors have had appropriate safeguarding training and use this expertise to ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school and that pupils are kept safe.

Inspection findings

- Leaders have ensured that the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been addressed.
- Leaders have quickly identified the reasons behind the untypical 2016 key stage 2 results. Current data and work seen in pupils' books indicate that the vast majority of pupils are on track to achieve age-related expectations by the end of this academic year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are challenged through the choosing of a 'mild, spicy or hot' level of difficulty. One Year 5 pupil told me that he often chooses the Year 6 challenges. Evidence in Year 6 writing books shows that pupils are editing and redrafting work themselves in order to improve its quality. As a result of this, a higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve at a greater depth in reading and writing than was the case last year.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their skills when reasoning and solving problems in mathematics.
- The school's website does not meet statutory requirements for information that should be published on it. Consequently, parents are not fully informed regarding the work of the school.
- Teaching assistants are a strength. They support pupils' learning well and help to ensure that pupils who require extra help in lessons receive it quickly.
- Pupils welcome the wide variety of sporting opportunities open to them. The school has very good on-site facilities for pupils to develop their skills in a wide variety of physical activities. Palterton pupils are currently the district champions in rugby, table tennis and quick cricket.

- Governors make regular visits to school and hold school leaders to account for their actions. Governors are knowledgeable and keen for the school to succeed. For example, they recently led a successful campaign to encourage parents to park their cars away from the school at the start and end of the day to ensure the maximum road safety.
- The attendance of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, is well above national averages. Persistent absence rates are well below national averages.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its work, with one commenting, 'I could not ask for any more.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportions of pupils working at a greater depth in mathematics are increased by ensuring that pupils are given more opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills
- the school website meets statutory requirements in order for parents and carers to have a clear understanding of the school and its 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

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I held meetings with you, your senior teacher and three members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. I also met with a representative of the local authority who is currently supporting the school. I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning and took account of their views through the 20 responses to the online survey, Parent View and the 17 responses to the text service. I took account of 28 pupil views through the text service. I visited all classrooms with you to see the learning that was taking place and I examined a range of pupils' books from across key stage 1 and key stage 2. I examined a range of school documentation, including the school self-evaluation, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, school assessment information and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.