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Mr Paul Tuffin
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Dear Mr Tuffin

Short inspection of Southfields Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 July 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, your deputy headteacher, staff and governors display a very high level of commitment to the pupils and the wider community. Together you have created a school in which pupils are happy and keen to learn. You provide strong, effective leadership and have the respect of pupils, staff and parents. As a result, your staff and pupils are proud to be part of the school. Your leadership team supports you well and shows a determination to bring about further improvement. Governors have a range of expertise and are well informed. They increasingly provide effective challenge to you and senior leaders to help ensure that outcomes continue to improve.

Pupils are well behaved and good ambassadors for the school. Pupils of all ages speak positively about how the teachers make learning fun. They value the trips and range of extra-curricular activities that they can access and, as they get older, the opportunities that they have to take on additional responsibilities such as 'playground pals' and the school council. The school has created its own set of values which are known as 'GARK', standing for Good learners; Acceptance; Responsibility; and Kindness. These values can be seen in practice across the school. Pupils work and play well together. They have a good understanding of a wide range of cultures and religions. For example, a group of Year 5 pupils talked to me about creation stories and the similarities and differences that there are between some major religions. One member of staff expressed the importance of

acceptance by saying that the school celebrates 'how everyone is the same but different'.

The school is bright and welcoming. Displays around the school support learning in a wide variety of subjects and celebrate pupils' achievements. Evidence from lessons and pupils' books shows that activities are generally purposeful, and are adapted to meet the needs of most pupils. For example, in Year 1 we saw pupils writing thank-you letters to an older class for their help with sports day. Some pupils were writing these entirely independently, some had support from an adult, while others were completing a template. In Year 5, pupils were writing explanations about the journey of a cocoa bean from Ghana to Birmingham as part of their topic on chocolate. Some pupils completed a very structured task, matching pictures with descriptions and then sequencing them. Other pupils used their own notes, made after watching a video, to support their writing. This was a successful activity because, having completed a similar activity earlier in the year, the pupils knew the features that they needed to include in their writing to give a good explanation. Across the school, work seen in a sample of books shows good progress during the year from individual starting points.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding in order to strengthen pupils' progress. From evidence gathered, teaching is strong across the school and staff are helped to further improve through in-class support and the sharing of effective practice. Teachers are given professional freedom to develop their own styles and approaches based on a core of school-wide expectations. Pupils like these different approaches and they understand the feedback that they receive from their teachers about the quality of their work. However, pupils need to be clearer about what they should do next to move their learning forward.

As a result of your drive for continuous improvement, outcomes are getting better across the school and, in many cases, are close to national levels. Given the high mobility of pupils, and the many who join school at the very early stages of learning English, this represents at least good progress for the majority of pupils. However, there is more that could be done to ensure that your most able pupils have opportunities to develop knowledge and skills at a higher level across a range of subjects. There is also more that could be done to build on the skills children develop in Nursery to maximise their impact as they move into the Reception Year.

Safeguarding is effective.

Keeping children safe is at the heart of your work. You have created a safeguarding team which ensures that the school is a safe environment for pupils and that they are well cared for at all times. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

All staff have had training that enables them to understand their responsibilities with regard to keeping pupils safe. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns. Your team focuses on dealing with any difficulties or concerns early in order to stop them from escalating. This preventative work is effective. Where appropriate your team works closely with external agencies and team

members are persistent in following up concerns about pupils' welfare. Governors understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and the chair of governors regularly meets with representatives of the safeguarding team to offer support.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they are taught how to stay safe, for example, when using the internet or crossing the road. They know who to speak to if they have any concerns and they are confident that an adult will quickly address any issues.

Inspection findings

- You and your team were disappointed with outcomes in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. You took effective action to address this by raising the profile of writing across the school, ensuring that staff provided pupils with more opportunities to write in a variety of styles and across a range of subjects. Your leadership team also provided training for all teachers and teaching assistants to help develop a consistent approach across classes. This, along with new approaches to the teaching of phonics and spelling, has resulted in an increase in both the amount of progress that pupils make and the proportion of pupils reaching the standard expected for their age in writing.
- You and your staff provide good support for the many pupils who join the school part way through each academic year, including several who are at the very early stages of learning English. This input enables the majority to settle quickly and make rapid progress. They soon become confident speakers while, more gradually, developing their reading and writing skills. Providing pupils with a rich curriculum, including trips and visitors to school, helps to broaden pupils' experiences and develop their vocabulary. This has a positive impact on the quality of their writing.
- Every pupil in the school is known, and treated, as an individual. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to address the needs of disadvantaged pupils. The school has clear systems in place to identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to manage any additional interventions and, increasingly, to measure their impact. Activities are varied and appropriate to the needs of each child. Leaders regularly review the deployment of staff across the school to check that they are being used to maximum effect.
- You and your leadership team have developed an assessment system which allows all staff to track the progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, everyone is now clearer about which individuals and groups of pupils are making good progress and who is at risk of falling behind. You have set high expectations and this has led to teachers taking more responsibility for the progress of pupils in their classes. While you monitor pupils' progress on a termly basis, teachers are confident about raising any concerns with you at any time in order to help secure pupils' outcomes. You are becoming more confident about the accuracy of the data and this is checked when teachers within school, and from across your local network of schools, meet to compare outcomes and standards.
- All subject leaders regularly have time to monitor progress in their subjects. They

seek views from pupils and staff, review planning, look at pupils' work and observe teaching. As a result, each leader knows the strengths and areas for development within their subject, devising an action plan to help bring about improvements. This approach contributes to the high-quality curriculum on offer, and has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Additionally, you and your deputy headteacher regularly visit all classrooms. From this you have identified that while pupils understand the tasks that they are completing, they are not always clear about what they are actually learning. This is an aspect of teaching that you have plans to address.

- Children in Reception Year make good progress, as can be seen from their learning journals. For each of the last five years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased and, while outcomes remain below those seen nationally, the majority of children are well prepared to start Year 1. Links between the Nursery class and Reception classes are not currently being used to help maximise children's progress. This is an area which could be strengthened to enable the children to benefit from shared routines and expectations.
- Provisional outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 are more closely in line with those seen nationally than was the case in 2016. Initial information shows that 58% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics compared to 61% nationally. Pupils made strong progress in all areas, especially mathematics.
- As with other groups of pupils, you track the progress of your most able pupils on a termly basis and you have high expectations that pupils will maintain strong outcomes. However, you are aware that there are some pupils who may not yet be making the progress that they could. You already have plans to adapt the mathematics curriculum to help more pupils to work at greater depth. You agree that enhancing the provision for your most able pupils across the curriculum is an area for further development.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance was above the national average in 2016. This year attendance has improved further and is currently 97.25%. Attendance is high for all groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- links between Nursery and Reception classes are strengthened
- pupils are clear about what they need to do next to improve their work
- they further enhance the provision for the most able pupils to accelerate their progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of staff. I also met with two governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils both formally and informally.

Together we visited classes in all year groups where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some books. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents, including your school self-evaluation and documents relating to safeguarding.

There were insufficient responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, for them to be published. However, I took account of the five free-text responses to the questionnaire received. I also took account of 39 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 35 responses to the pupil questionnaire.