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Mrs Ruth Roberts  
Headteacher  
Swan Lane First School  
Rynal Street  
Evesham  
Worcestershire  
WR11 4QA

Dear Mrs Roberts

### **Short inspection of Swan Lane First School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 2016, 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 November 2010.

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

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

You were appointed as permanent headteacher in January 2016, having been the deputy headteacher at the school since 2007. You were also substantive headteacher on a part-time basis from September 2014 to December 2015, during the previous headteacher's phased retirement. Effective leadership succession has ensured minimal disruption for the school and has maintained stability for parents, staff and pupils.

Together with strong support from your leadership team and governors, you have set a highly ambitious vision for the school. You strive to ensure that pupils receive consistently good-quality provision and that pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. You have continued to drive improvement and evaluate developments across the school. The school provides a nurturing, inclusive environment in which pupils thrive.

Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the areas for development identified at the time of the last inspection have been fully addressed. The relentless focus on improving pupils' writing has led to attainment gaps between boys and girls closing. The standard of presentation in pupils' books and their ability to use a neat and cursive handwriting style is much improved. Work is extremely well

presented and of a very high quality. This is because these aspects are taught well and teachers' expectations are high. Only good-quality work and pupils' best efforts are accepted.

You and your leadership team have risen well to the challenge of assessing pupils' abilities without levels. You have successfully implemented the new curriculum and devised a system that tracks pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You efficiently gather and summarise information about the progress of different groups. Close examination of this information enables you to accurately and effectively identify which pupils need additional support or intervention to ensure that they do not fall behind. Teachers provide valuable guidance in English and mathematics to help pupils improve their work and understand their next steps.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff take the safeguarding of pupils very seriously. You make sure that protecting pupils from harm is non-negotiable and is a collective responsibility. As a result, all staff have received appropriate training, including in preventing radicalisation, and have read the latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education.' Staff understand their safeguarding duties and know who to report to if they have any concerns. As the designated leader, you ensure that you follow these concerns up and make referrals when needed to the appropriate authorities. Records are stored securely and well organised.

The school site is regularly checked and any hazards quickly addressed. Safer recruitment procedures are robust to ensure that members of staff appointed are fit to work with children. All staff are recorded on the single central record, which meets statutory requirements. Clear policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and risk assessment have been developed. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe in different situations and as such have a good understanding of this. For example, pupils visited the 'life education van' during the inspection to learn about the dangers of drug abuse. Fire drills and information about internet safety are also regular features on the timetable. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have a problem. They say there are very few incidents of bullying and that staff deal with instances quickly and effectively. All of the parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) agree that their child feels safe and is happy at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils achieve well at this good school. Children join Reception year with skills that are generally typical for their age. They make good, and on occasion outstanding, progress in Key Stage 1. This good achievement continues in Years 3, 4 and 5. As a result, pupils leave the school well prepared for middle school with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Since the previous inspection, standards have continued to be significantly above the national average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 5. Standards in writing are particularly strong and the quality of writing seen in pupils' books during the inspection was extremely high, especially in Year 2. Pupils' vocabulary is well developed by introducing difficult words each day, such as 'diligent', and regular attention is paid to the correct use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Senior and middle leaders are fully involved in leading improvements to teaching and learning. They carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. They have an accurate understanding of which aspects are working well and which need further improvement. They use the information gathered from monitoring activities to devise succinct action plans and lead training to ensure that teachers are fully equipped to implement any changes needed. All staff are keen to improve their teaching. They work in close partnership with other local schools and visit other settings to inform their own practice.
- Teaching is typically good and caters well for the needs of pupils with different abilities. During our visits to classrooms, we noted the calm and purposeful learning environments around the school. Pupils were all on task and many were having additional support from teaching assistants or working on a one-to-one basis outside the classroom. This additional support ensures that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability make similar progress to their peers and attainment gaps are closing. The increasing numbers of pupils joining the school from Eastern Europe are quickly and fully integrated into the school. They too receive additional support and benefit from the well-planned intervention programmes in place. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well. Additional challenge is provided for the most-able pupils with teachers setting work that is more difficult. This enables pupils to make good progress and reach the higher levels.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They make good progress and the majority reach a good level of development. Good links are established with parents from the outset. Homework journals are completed weekly with parents contributing helpful comments and providing photographs of learning activities at home. This information adds to teachers' detailed knowledge of individual children. Teachers assess children on entry to Reception year. However, assessments made are, on occasion, overly cautious. This is because teachers and leaders do not use all of the information available, for example evidence of home learning, records from pre-school settings, work in children's book and standardised tests to inform their judgement of attainment on entry.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school. Pupils spoken to said they 'love school because teachers make lessons fun'. Pupils understand the behaviour policy and are clear about the sanctions and rewards in place. They particularly like being nominated to have afternoon tea with you as a reward for being polite and demonstrating good manners. School records and the views of parents also provide evidence that behaviour is good. There are very few recorded incidents but those that take place are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

- You have ensured that robust systems are in place to track and follow up pupils' absence. Parents are contacted immediately if a pupil fails to arrive at school and referrals are made to the local authority attendance officer if pupils are persistently absent. The attendance of a small number of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, however, remains below national average. Actions taken to date have already shown improvement in the attendance of other groups, including disadvantaged pupils. As a result, attendance overall is improving.
- The school environment is bright and vibrant. High-quality displays showcase and celebrate pupils' work. Classrooms also display helpful prompts to aid learning. All areas are clean, tidy and well looked after. Pupils take pride in themselves and their school. They have very positive attitudes to learning and their personal development. They are taught to respect adults and each other. They have a good understanding of those from other cultures and with different beliefs. Newly arrived pupils from other countries settle quickly because they are made to feel welcome. However, pupils do not yet have an understanding of British values as these have not been taught. You are aware of this and already plan to reintroduce the personal, social and emotional (PSE) curriculum to address this.
- Governors are knowledgeable and very experienced. They utilise their skills fully to support and challenge leaders as they share the leadership team's ambition to be an outstanding school. They visit school regularly to meet with leaders and check the quality of teaching by looking at pupils' books or visiting classrooms. They have a good understanding of how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally as they receive regular reports from leaders. They have a clear knowledge of improvements made since the previous inspection and are becoming increasingly familiar with the changes being introduced in relation to the new assessment system.
- Parents are delighted with the school. They have very positive views and appreciate the care and quality of education their children receive. As one parent put it on Parent View, 'The progress that both my children have made has gone far beyond my expectations.' You canvass the views of parents, staff and pupils regularly and this provides helpful feedback for further improvements.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all available evidence collected about children's starting points in Reception year is used to inform leaders' judgements about attainment on entry
- you work with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs or disability to improve their child's attendance so that it is at least in line with other pupils nationally
- pupils are taught about British values to help prepare them for life in modern Britain.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Worcestershire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I met with you and members of your leadership team and governing body. I discussed the work of the school with you and carried out some visits to early years, Year 2 and Year 5 classrooms. During these visits, I looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their learning. I also spoke informally to pupils about behaviour and how they learn how to keep themselves safe. I observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtime as well as in lessons.

Discussions with school governors and a telephone conversation with the local authority representative helped to provide additional information. I looked at a range of school documents including the checks on staff's suitability to work with children, the school's information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance and leaders' action plans and reports on teaching. I took account of the 19 responses to Parent View, together with responses to the school's own pupil, parent and staff questionnaires.