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Ms Dawn Copping  
Headteacher  
Shaw Primary Academy  
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Essex  
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Dear Ms Copping

### **Short inspection of Shaw Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 1 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Despite a large building programme, Shaw Primary Academy remains a highly purposeful place to learn, underpinned by the motto that 'At Shaw we are Safe, Aiming high and Working together'. Much has been achieved since the last inspection. Staff who were at the school at that time now comment that Shaw Academy is even better and that standards and expectations for pupils' achievement have continued to improve.

Your vision and enthusiasm for improving the learning experience of pupils has continued. You are ably supported by your leadership team in developing an environment where children, pupils and staff can excel. By the time pupils leave Shaw, at the end of Year 6, most have made good progress and some have made even better gains in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils of the same age nationally. Your focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that a broad and balanced curriculum is well planned, giving opportunities for pupils to develop their curiosity and their interests.

Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. They are confident and happy to engage in conversations about their school. All the pupils I spoke with were proud of their school. Conduct around the school is exemplary. Pupils' relationships with each other and adults are a strength of the school. These are characterised by warmth, good humour and respect. Your inclusion team ensures that care and guidance is appropriately given to those individual pupils who need

additional support. As a result, learning in lessons proceeds without interruption and the school is a calm and happy place.

Governors have an accurate view of what is working well and what could be better still. Through regular visits, they assure themselves that pupils are well cared for and safe.

Since the last inspection, you have ensured that your middle leaders monitor their subject areas well. They track pupils' progress and analyse the impact of learning regularly for subjects such as science, history and art. Due to the good-quality training these leaders have received, they offer effective advice and guidance to other staff. Monitoring is strongly focused on pupils' engagement and achievement.

You have robustly tackled issues highlighted in the last inspection report regarding attendance and persistent absence. You and your team work hard to give appropriate support to parents so their children can attend school more. This year, pupils' attendance overall is currently in line with other primary schools nationally.

The academy receives a large amount of funding to provide effectively for the achievement of disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium grant. Due to your aim to treat every pupil as an individual, these pupils receive the support they require. As a result, in 2015 most made good progress from their starting points by the end of key stage 2.

You have rightly identified the need to increase the good level of development in the early years. Children enter broadly typical for their age, with many more that are even better. Children develop their early reading skills quickly through the precise teaching they receive in phonics, together with many interesting opportunities made available to them so they can practise their skills independently. One of the youngest children told me 'we learn phonics well here'.

You and your staff are determined to prepare pupils well for life in the modern world by ensuring that the curriculum and learning activities are well suited to their interests and capabilities. Pupils enjoy learning. When asked, they were quick to list subjects such as art, music and sport as favourites, together with English and mathematics. This is because teachers make lessons fun. One pupil told me that teachers 'add sugar and spice' to make lessons enjoyable.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. The school website contains all the required information. You and your governors take every precaution to ensure that pupils are safe at school. You have established a strong safeguarding culture. In a recent questionnaire, parents overwhelmingly agreed that their children are safe at school. Meticulous recording systems are in place, and leaders and governors are rigorous in making necessary checks to keep a

careful oversight of safeguarding. Staff training is fully up to date and staff know what to do if there are any concerns about a pupil.

Pupils are taught about keeping safe when using the internet. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to speak with if they have concerns. The vast majority of parents who responded on Parent View agree that their children are kept safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- In the last inspection report, inspectors praised the school for many aspects of its work, especially your work on ensuring that pupils make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. You have continued this good work as a leadership team. You have also maintained a high level of care for the pupils. As a result, adults and pupils have very good relationships, which remain a strength of the school.
- You were asked to improve the attendance of pupils and reduce persistent absenteeism. This you have worked hard to achieve. By allocating some of your funding to employ a parental support worker, you tackle issues of attendance robustly and in a supportive way. You celebrate those pupils who attend fully or who rarely miss a day. Consequently, the attendance of pupils overall is at the level achieved nationally for primary schools.
- Governors are committed to the school and highly supportive of it. They work closely with you and your senior leaders and support you well. Governors clearly know the strengths and areas for improvement. Minutes of governing body meetings indicate that they ask questions about things they are told and the information that they are given. However, governors sometimes accept the answers too readily and need to challenge more deeply in order to better hold school leaders to account.
- You have developed very effective leadership of others across the school. Your senior team shares your high expectations of all members of the school community. Each member has a passion for their role and is held accountable for their actions. For example, the leadership of the inclusion team and the team's work in providing support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability are strengths. Evidence seen on inspection indicates that the needs of these pupils are identified accurately. Effective and caring support is in place, which enables pupils who have special educational needs or disability to make strong progress both academically and personally.
- Since the last inspection, you have responded well to the inspectors' request to develop the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. They are well trained, and understand and perform their roles effectively. Middle leaders regularly monitor their subjects, and provide guidance and training to staff. As a result, pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that develops their interests and deepens their knowledge.
- Pupils told me that they appreciate the roles and responsibilities that they can apply for at the school such as 'office junior' and lunchtime monitors.

One pupil informed me that she wanted to hold a position at the school, and was so determined she applied and was interviewed three times before she was successful. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and learn about the values of perseverance and fairness through the roles that they hold.

- Pupils achieve very well by the time they leave Shaw. This is because you have ensured that systems and procedures to help children and pupils to learn to read, write and understand mathematics are well established. The proportions who make better than expected progress by the end of key stage 2 are significantly above those expected for their age.
- You are aware that, at times, the most-able pupils do not have the same guidance and support from adults as the other pupils. This would enable them to make the progress of which they are capable and achieve even more. Work in these pupils' books shows that teachers do not routinely provide precise support that helps the most-able pupils to understand what they have to do to improve. Consequently, most-able pupils do not always make the rates of good or even better progress as other pupils on their journey through the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as their classmates in 2015 in key stage 1. However, by the time they leave the school, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress from their starting points. The achievement of these younger pupils and reducing the gaps in their learning are areas for the school to improve further, so these pupils can make even better progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- spending of the pupil premium grant is fine-tuned to provide maximum benefit to disadvantaged pupils and raise attainment at key stage 1
- outcomes for pupils improve, particularly at the higher levels, so that children and pupils attain and make the progress of which they are capable
- governors develop further their ability to hold academy leaders to account for pupils' progress by questioning more deeply the information they are given.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, members of the governing body, including the chair, middle leaders, and a family support worker. I spoke with pupils informally at lunchtime and met with a group of 18 pupils to discuss the school's work. I observed teaching in almost all classes where I looked at pupils' work, to consider the quality of learning over time. I reviewed school's documents about safeguarding, including the single central record, attendance and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. There were 10 responses from parents on Parent View to consider.