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Mrs Rhona Forde  
Headteacher  
Allesley Hall Primary School  
Winsford Avenue  
Coventry  
West Midlands  
CV5 9NG

Dear Mrs Forde

### **Short inspection of Allesley Hall Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 March 2013.

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

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has continued to improve because of your strong leadership and drive for excellence. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Allesley Hall Primary. They all agree that the school is well led and managed and that they are treated fairly and with respect. You, your assistant headteachers and governors have a shared commitment and enthusiasm to enabling all pupils to achieve the very best that they can. Pupils, parents and staff comment positively that the school feels like a 'family' where everyone knows, and cares for, each other. As one parent said, 'The school has a village feel despite being in the city.'

Pupils behave well in lessons, at breaktimes and around school. In lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss and share their work with their peers. For example in Year 6, I observed pupils supporting each other to solve mathematical problems where they had to work out which offer was 'the best deal'. In Year 1, pupils listened carefully as one pupil explained how a 'story map' could help the class retell the tale of the Gingerbread Man. This year, you have a focus on developing pupils' ability to reason and to explain their thinking. I saw an example of this in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, when the teacher said, 'I don't want a yes or no answer. I want to know why.'

Support for pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare remains a strength of the school. Pupils contribute well to the life of the school through roles including

sports leaders, representatives on the school council and anti-bullying ambassadors. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and whom to talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

Most parents are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. Several parents say how pleased they are with the progress their children are making. They appreciate the regular information they receive about the curriculum and the work their children are doing in class. However, a small minority of parents have concerns relating to bullying within school. You, your staff and governors are aware of these concerns and have taken effective action to address any real or perceived issues. These actions include updating your anti-bullying policy, ensuring that pupils know what forms bullying can take and what they should do if they are bullied. You have also introduced anti-bullying ambassadors.

Anti-bullying ambassadors (ABAs) are a group of older pupils who help others to deal with friendship problems or arguments. The ABAs were selected following a rigorous interview process and this gives them credibility within school. The ABAs have been successful in raising pupils' awareness of bullying by talking to every class, leading whole school assemblies and speaking to governors. 'Be brave, be bold, make sure you've told' is a phrase pupils know and understand. The pupils I spoke to told me that incidents of bullying in school are rare. The pupils were confident that any concerns would be followed up by the ABAs, a class teacher or yourself. Despite this good work, you are still determined to develop this area further and to ensure that all parents have confidence in the school's provision.

Following the last inspection, you and your governing body restructured the school leadership team so that you are now ably supported by two assistant headteachers. This approach enables you to address the needs of individual pupils more effectively. In addition, all teachers now have a whole-school subject leadership role. Teachers speak enthusiastically about these changes and the high expectations you and the governors set for them. This structure helps to improve outcomes for all pupils.

Teachers also speak positively about the regular training and coaching they receive. They value the opportunity to reflect on their teaching and this has improved the quality of teaching and learning across the school. To help the school continue to improve, you have made sure that Allesley Hall Primary is not a school that works alone. Staff have regular opportunities for working with other schools, comparing pupils' work and sharing effective practice and training. This means that you and your staff can be confident that the judgements you are making about the standards of pupils' work are accurate and robust.

Outcomes in writing are now strong across the school with pupils achieving above national outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2015 and 2016. Since the last inspection, you have introduced a new curriculum which includes more opportunities for extended writing across a wide range of subjects. Pupils now have more opportunities to edit and improve their writing based on clear criteria. You have also introduced a regular focus on the basic skills of handwriting, spelling,

grammar and punctuation. The effective application of these skills can be seen in the work of most classes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. As a result, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for at all times.

All staff have regular and appropriate training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns. You are persistent when concerned about a pupil's welfare, and work with external agencies as necessary. You, your leadership team and governors have a good understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the context of the school and are alert to issues including the risks of children going missing from education.

### **Inspection findings**

- Mathematics outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were disappointing. While some of the underperformance was due to a social and emotional issue which affected a proportion of the pupils, you and your leadership team identified that a number of pupils were not able to confidently apply their mathematics knowledge to solve mathematical problems. You took swift action to address this by introducing a whole-school focus on developing problem-solving skills and using mathematics knowledge in a range of different contexts. To support this approach, you have also introduced a regular focus on basic mathematics skills such as number bonds and multiplication tables. You are aware of the need to ensure that pupils' outcomes are strong across all areas of the curriculum and you have set high expectations for all pupils.
- You and your leadership team have planned a broad and balanced curriculum that gives all pupils a range of experiences including regular trips and contributions from visitors to the school. These activities help to bring topics to life and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. You are keenly aware of the need to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. As a result, you ensure that the curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to learn about a range of different cultures and religions, for example, through visits to a gurdwara and a synagogue. Pupils enjoy these trips and say that the visits help them to learn about the lives of other people. The pupils I spoke to were very clear about the importance of valuing diversity and stressing how 'it's good to be different'.
- You and your leadership team regularly gather information about the progress pupils are making. You have established a clear system that is used effectively by leaders and teachers to record which pupils or groups are making progress and which need some additional support or challenge. You rigorously check that actions to address identified needs have been taken and that these are helping the pupils to make the progress required. You use additional funding effectively to provide small-group work and one-to-one support. For example, you have

identified a group of more-able Year 6 pupils who are receiving targeted mathematics support, while in Year 2, additional time from a teaching assistant is supporting phonics and reading comprehension programmes. Interventions are flexible and are adapted to ensure maximum impact on the targeted individuals, groups and classes. This support makes a strong contribution to accelerating pupils' rates of progress.

- Pupils' attendance is better than that seen nationally but everyone in school continues to see promoting good attendance as a priority. For example, you ensure that parents are aware of the importance of good attendance through termly letters giving details of their child's attendance. As part of your safeguarding systems you follow up any child who is absent from the first day they are not in school. You also reward good attendance through a variety of individual and class-based rewards.
- Children enter school at the beginning of the Reception Year from a wide range of pre-school settings and from across the city. In order to ensure that the children settle quickly, you actively promote links with parents, including home visits and regular newsletters. Members of your early years team quickly assess the children's needs and plan activities to address these. Progress is recorded through the use of 'learning journals' which enable both teachers and parents to monitor the developments children are making and the next steps they need to take. Staff encourage parents to contribute to the learning journals by sharing examples of activities from outside school and 'wow' moments from home.
- Governance is strong. Governors are well informed about all aspects of the school and, as a result, they are able to provide a good balance of support and challenge to you and the school leadership team. They are regular visitors to school, joining training sessions and taking part in monitoring activities. This helps them to build up an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the rates of progress and outcomes for pupils of all ages are consistently above those seen nationally and that outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are all of an equally high standard
- the whole school community understands the school's approach to anti-bullying.

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 and your senior leadership team. I visited all classes where I observed teaching and learning, and I spoke to pupils about their work. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils both formally and informally. I listened to some pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy reading. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, the school development plan, incident logs and documents relating to safeguarding. I met with three governors including the chair of governors. I took account of the 64 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 50 comments received electronically and a hand-delivered letter from a parent. I also took account of the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

At the start of the inspection, we agreed to focus on five lines of enquiry:

- Have the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection been addressed?
- What actions are leaders taking to support current Year 2 pupils to ensure strong outcomes at the end of key stage 1?
- What actions have leaders taken to address the relative underperformance at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, especially in relation to mathematics?
- How effectively does the school promote good attendance?
- Are pupils safe and secure in school?