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Mr Wingrove  
Headteacher  
Spon Gate Primary School  
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Dear Mr Jamie Wingrove

### **Short inspection of Spon Gate Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 November 2012.

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

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

You provide clear and determined leadership. Your vision and attention to detail make a significant contribution to the continued improvement of the school. Other leaders are very effective because you engender a sense of teamwork and trust. Your self-evaluation of the school is accurate and plans for improvement are precise. Consequently, you take swift and effective action to address priorities. Parents, pupils and staff fully support the leadership and direction of the school.

You and the staff manage your complex and diverse school community with skill and sensitivity. There is a high level of mobility and some pupils only stay at the school for a short period of time. For example, in the academic year 2016/17, 90 pupils joined the school in-year and 60 pupils left. Many of the new pupils that join the school speak English as an additional language. There are 47 different languages spoken in the school. You make good use of resources and staff, including 'learning mentors', to help settle pupils and families into the school. Pupils quickly pick up the language required to thrive in their learning.

Your school values, including, 'respect', 'courage', 'perseverance' and 'aspiration' are central to the ethos of the school. You and your staff take the time to get to know pupils as individuals. Relationships at all levels are caring and attentive. As a result, pupils feel very safe and their behaviour is good. The provision for vulnerable pupils

is particularly strong. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive precise additional support from adults and make good progress. Other pupils with complex behaviour or emotional needs are extremely well supported and integrated into the school.

You have successfully responded to the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You and your deputy headteacher ensure that the highest quality teaching in the school is shared with others. For example, teachers work together to study an aspect of teaching and observe the best practice of other teachers. You also place strong teachers in the same year group with teachers who are newer to the profession. As a result of these collaborative approaches, teaching continues to improve. Teachers' questioning is a particularly strong feature of the good teaching across the school. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply because questions are often open ended.

Since the previous inspection, you have put in place strategies to provide greater challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop rich vocabulary and to rehearse sentences orally before writing. This approach is having a positive impact on pupils' writing, particularly for the most able. At the end of key stage 1 in 2016, more pupils achieved the higher standard in writing than the national average. In mathematics, teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their understanding through different problems and challenges. Consequently, standards in mathematics have improved. In 2017, more pupils achieved the higher standard at the end of key stage 2 than the previous year.

A key strength of the school is the lively curriculum. Pupils are motivated by the exciting topics that they cover because staff make learning interesting and practical. For example, pupils spoke about making shields and re-enacting a battle when studying about the Romans. They also talked about how much they had learned when making bread in science. Your thoughtful curriculum enables pupils to develop good skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of subjects.

You and the staff provide a wealth of wider enrichment opportunities. Pupils play regular competitive sport against other schools and enjoy the success that they achieve. They also love to attend the broad range of clubs that are on offer. Examples include tap dance, football, netball, 'make and create' and cookery. Pupils also enjoy the 'something different' club where they get to choose a creative challenge to do each week. The broad range of activities that you offer has a strong impact on pupils' personal development.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education at the school, they appreciate how happy and settled their children are. You and the staff communicate well with parents and you make them feel part of the school community.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

You take your role as designated safeguarding lead very seriously and have put in place very thorough systems to keep pupils safe. Staff raise concerns that they have about pupils in a timely manner and you follow up these concerns tenaciously. You also involve external agencies when it is appropriate to do so and you are not afraid to challenge when you think support for pupils can be improved. You provide regular training for staff and, as a result, they have a good understanding of their responsibilities. The culture for safeguarding in the school is good.

You have ensured that safety is taught well throughout the curriculum. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly with internet safety. Pupils were quick to identify the associated risks online and were clear that they would tell an adult if they were concerned about something. They also knew not to give out personal information and commented that they use a safe search engine when looking for images online.

## **Inspection findings**

- You are taking effective action to improve outcomes in the early years. The majority of children enter Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below a typical level for their age. While the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception is below the national average, children make good progress from their starting points. Most children that attend school from the start of Nursery go on to achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. Staff and children develop really strong bonds. Consequently, children are happy, settled and well behaved. Teachers plan activities that are appropriately challenging and well-matched to children's needs. There is a strong focus on language acquisition through adults' interactions with children and through the range of language on display. Staff make good use of resources and activities to foster a high level of independence and creativity among the children.
- One of your core priorities is to continue to improve attainment across the school. Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have been below national levels for the last two years. However, over that time, a significant proportion of pupils started school during Year 2. You provided convincing evidence to show that a high proportion of pupils who start in Reception go on to achieve the expected standards by the end of key stage 1. We observed teaching and looked at pupils' books in key stage 1. These activities supported your evaluation that teaching in key stage 1 is good. In Year 2, the teaching of writing and the development of vocabulary is lively and interesting. Pupils enjoy trying to find more ambitious words to put into their writing. You have also changed the structure of teaching in Year 1, so that pupils spend longer immersed in particular subjects. This is having a positive impact on their progress.
- You have successfully raised attainment at the end of key stage 2. Despite the significant mobility in the school, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 was just below the national average. It was also an improvement on the 2016 results. Outcomes

in mathematics have been raised and in 2017 at the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard was above the national average.

- You continually reflect and refine your approaches to the teaching of reading. Pupils read widely and often. They enjoy the activities in guided reading sessions and talk confidently about their preferred authors and books. Teachers have developed effective reading areas in the classroom, which further embeds the culture for reading. In one classroom, pupils proudly pointed out their 'reading list' display with books by 'Dick King-Smith' and 'Roald Dahl'. There is not a consistent level of challenge applied to reading comprehension skills across the school. You already have plans to address this which will help to accelerate the progress for all pupils.
- Your systems for monitoring and analysing attendance rates are suitably robust. You challenge poor attendance and support families to make sure that pupils attend school regularly. Learning mentors offer valuable support in promoting good attendance with pupils and families. Overall attendance rates are broadly similar to those seen nationally. Over the last two years, persistence absence for some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been high. You are proactive in addressing individual cases of persistent absence and there are valid reasons why it remains high for this group of pupils.
- Governors are proactive and determined to get the best for the school community. They provide an effective level of challenge in most of the key areas of school improvement. The governor responsible for safeguarding carries out appropriate checks on the various safety procedures in the school. Governors also provide effective scrutiny of pay decisions for teachers and the performance management of the headteacher is robust. However, governors' scrutiny of pupil assessment information, and statutory test results, varies in quality. Further training in this area will enable governors to ask more probing questions and hold leaders to account for pupil outcomes.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide pupils with sufficiently challenging opportunities to develop their reading comprehension skills
- governors have a better understanding of pupil assessment information in order to hold leaders to account for pupil outcomes.

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

Matt Meckin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with the chair of governors and two other governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to nine classrooms with you and looked at pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered nine free-text responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

I scrutinised various documents including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan, information about teachers' performance management and the documents that you use to check the quality of teaching. You shared with me the most recent assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. We discussed the national test results and assessments undertaken by pupils in 2016 and 2017. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, as well as minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.