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Spencer Morris  
Headteacher  
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Worcestershire  
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Dear Mr Morris

### **Short inspection of Red Hill CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 January 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 have high expectations of all members of the school community. You ensure that the school's values, including 'showing respect to all cultures and beliefs' and 'making sure the school is a happy, friendly place where everyone has the chance to learn and achieve to their best' are shared and promoted by all members of staff.

As a result, relationships between adults and pupils are strong and productive and pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Parents are extremely positive about the work of the school and appreciate what it provides for them and their children. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey would recommend Red Hill CofE Primary School to another parent. A parent's comment that 'the headteacher is extremely visible and knows each child as an individual' was representative of nearly all of the views submitted through the online survey.

Pupils are well behaved, polite and considerate. They show pride in their school and value what it offers them. They appreciate the opportunities that you and other members of staff create for them to take on responsibility and to help to shape the development of the school. For example, pupils on the school council have been involved with lunchtime staff in extending the range of activities available during

their playtimes. They have also worked with an architect to establish 'friendship spots' on the playgrounds.

You have successfully managed a period of considerable change since the last inspection. Since that time several new staff have joined the school and a new senior leadership team has been established. You are aware that at a time when the school is expanding in size to become a two-form entry school there is still further work to be done to ensure that all leaders in school have the necessary skills in monitoring and evaluation. This will be required to enable all leaders to successfully lead and manage their areas of responsibility and contribute effectively to the school's ongoing development.

You, together with governors, have taken a measured and highly considered approach to the expansion of the school. This includes making sure that the additional new buildings offer the same extremely high-quality learning environment as the existing classrooms and help to preserve the opportunities for pupils to feel part of a caring and united community. Governors are highly ambitious for the pupils and provide good levels of support and challenge.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have ensured that professional development has been carefully matched to the needs of staff and this has helped to improve the quality of teaching further. As a result, pupils' outcomes have continued to improve. In the 2017 national assessments, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 was above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils working at the higher standard was also above the national average. Pupils at the end of key stage 2 also attained well in reading and mathematics. However, the progress of the most able pupils in writing was below that of other pupils nationally. You have rightly recognised that this is an aspect of teaching that requires further development and have placed it at the centre of the school's improvement work in the current academic year.

There have been significant improvements in the early years provision since the previous inspection. You have ensured that strong and effective leadership is now in place in this part of the school. This has led to a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and outcomes for the children in the Reception classes. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development has increased over a three-year period and is now securely above the national average.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading and become fluent readers who show a depth of understanding of the books that they study. However, you are aware that there is a need to revisit the approach that the school takes to the teaching of phonics to ensure consistency of practice across all classes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Checks to ensure that staff employed by the school do not pose a threat to pupils are well established and all necessary recruitment procedures are followed. Staff

have been provided with training to ensure that they are in a good position to recognise how they can support pupils from the threat of radicalisation and extremism. Leaders have a good knowledge of the context of the local community.

Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Leaders have worked well with the building contractors to ensure that the school site is safe during the current expansion programme and that pupils understand the dangers that could occur while the building work is taking place.

Leaders are aware that their systems for recording and tracking any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being can be further strengthened to more accurately monitor the support that pupils receive.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have ensured that opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length are now firmly established. They have established a set of 'non-negotiables' that give teachers explicit guidance on how writing is taught. It includes the need for pupils to regularly edit their own work and for teachers to provide opportunities for pupils to choose what they write about. Teachers set pupils writing activities that engage their interest and stimulate their desire to write. For example, in a key stage 2 class, pupils wrote a persuasive argument about why residential trips were beneficial and of value. Their work demonstrated good use of language to influence the reader's opinion and also allowed pupils to accurately apply their skills and knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects are being extended through cross-curricular topic work.
- Writing activities for the most able pupils are not consistently well matched to their abilities and are, at times, too easy. This limits some pupils' opportunities to work at the higher levels.
- Senior leaders and governors recognise that there is a need to extend leadership roles and responsibilities in line with the demands that an expanding school brings. They are aware that monitoring and evaluation systems need to be further strengthened so that all leaders are able to identify and address the most pressing priorities that will help the school meet the needs of all of the school community.
- There is a strong emphasis in school on promoting a love of reading. Pupils' views and opinions are valued. Pupils have been involved in making choices about how they want the library to be established and the types of books that they wish to have available to them. Teachers and teaching assistants lead daily phonics sessions for children in the Reception classes and in the key stage 1 classes. However, some staff are less confident in ensuring that the teaching of phonics is closely matched to the specific needs of pupils as they develop their reading and writing skills.
- Provision within the early years has been greatly strengthened and developed since the last inspection. Leadership of early years is now good and this has been

instrumental in bringing about the necessary improvements. Leaders have accurately identified how teaching and learning can best meet the needs of the children and have put in place a structured approach that combines adult-led teaching with opportunities for children to apply their skills in investigative, independent activities.

- Parents are kept well involved in the children's education through an online communication system that is used effectively to monitor and record children's achievements. Parents who responded to the Parent View survey spoke very positively about the nurturing environment created by staff in the Reception classes that allowed their children to settle quickly and happily into school life.
- Overall attendance in school is above the national average. However, the attendance of the very small number of disadvantaged pupils has been lower than that of other pupils in recent years. Leaders have taken appropriate action to make sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that their children attend regularly and on time. This has included, at times, providing transport to school for pupils whose attendance falls below the acceptable levels. This has resulted in attendance of disadvantaged pupils rising and it is now only slightly below that of other pupils in school.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are able to fully access all the opportunities that the school offers and to provide additional support when required. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make at least the same good progress as their peers in school and their attainment compares well to other pupils nationally.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- additional training and support is provided so that all staff use a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics
- teachers set suitably challenging writing tasks for the most able pupils
- they continue to develop an extended leadership team, with appropriate skills in monitoring and evaluation, to support the school as it grows in size.

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

Yours sincerely

Adam Hewett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the acting deputy headteacher, the senior teacher and a middle leader. I met with seven governors, including the chair of the governing body. I considered the 86 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and looked at free-text comments and a letter from parents. I visited, together with you, five classes to observe learning. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime on the playground.

I scrutinised information about pupils' progress during the last academic year. I considered other documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school improvement plan. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies and checks on staff employed in the school, and checked the school's website. I also analysed the range of views expressed by staff through Ofsted's questionnaire about the school and its leadership.