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Mrs Mason  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Mason

### **Short inspection of Bushbury Hill Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2018, 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 June 2014.

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

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

The school is a well-led and orderly place in which to work and learn. Indeed, the headteacher and other leaders are organised and systematic in their approach to school management, welfare matters, teaching, learning and school improvement. Consequently, staff and pupils understand expectations, feel valued and know that they are expected to work hard and support one another. Adults act as positive role models and pupils are treated fairly and taught to respect others.

Since the previous inspection, when the school was asked to strengthen teaching and develop the role of subject leaders, academic standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen. In 2018, the proportions of pupils reaching or exceeding the expected standards for their age at the end of Year 6 were close to national figures. This represents strong progress and is the result of a whole-school effort to improve teaching and raise standards. In particular, subject leaders' work to develop pupils' reading skills across a range of subjects and encourage an interest in books is proving increasingly successful.

Nevertheless, there is still more work to be done to strengthen aspects of teaching, particularly around building pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. Leaders also acknowledge that they do not do enough to check on the effect of extra support given to some pupils.

Most parents who expressed a view are happy with the school's work. They welcome the extra activities and support that the school provides, such as a very popular breakfast club and free physical education (PE) kit. Looking to the future, school leaders are exploring ways to improve the flow of constructive information between home and school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders make sure that staff are kept fully informed about what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's safety or welfare. There is a safeguarding noticeboard in the staff room that includes all the latest safeguarding guidance and information about the school's safeguarding routines. Numerous posters around the school remind pupils, staff and visitors what to do if they have a concern. On top of this, leaders provide regular staff training to check that all are up to date and understand their duties. When concerns have arisen, staff have acted promptly and in the right way.

Governors have confidence in the rigour of the school's arrangements. This is because they have received appropriate training, have recruited governors with relevant expertise and are attentive to their responsibilities.

In response to 'Prevent' duty training, leaders have assessed local risks and teach pupils about the dangers of extreme views and behaviours.

The school employs learning mentors and attendance officers who work closely with families to support pupils' welfare. Their work helps families to get the right advice and help when they need it and has improved pupils' attendance at school. Together with other staff, they also ensure that any unexplained absences from school are followed up promptly.

Medicines in school are stored correctly and are readily available when needed. The school site is well maintained and kept secure and first-aid treatment is given promptly when required.

Aggressive or irresponsible behaviours are not tolerated, and leaders have taken a firm and responsible stance when any such incidents have occurred. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and say that bullying is rare. Inspection evidence supports this view.

### **Inspection findings**

- Most children start school with a level of knowledge and skill below that typical for their age. Teaching in the early years classes is mindful of this and staff are attentive to children's different needs. Consequently, most make good progress and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has followed an upward trend. Recently, it almost matched the national figure.

- This good progress continues into key stage 1 and there is no doubt that recent attention to improving the quality of phonics teaching has brought benefits. Phonics lessons take place four days out of five and sessions are well organised, brisk and purposeful. Furthermore, the school's reading leader routinely checks on teaching and guides staff with advice and demonstrations. Pupils of all ages understand what is expected from them. Staff have plenty of worthwhile resources and time is used efficiently and to good effect. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age in the Year 1 phonic screening check have been above national figures for the past three years. This is a commendable achievement.
- This attention to phonics has helped to improve pupils' reading and writing skills. Across the school, teachers in all classes have focused on developing pupils' reading skills and promoting reading for pleasure. Teachers routinely read to pupils in class and select interesting texts for pupils to study. During this inspection, for example, pupils talked with enthusiasm about the plot of 'Stig of the Dump'. Elsewhere, older key stage 2 pupils were eager to discover the meanings and use of unfamiliar words, such as 'crescendo'. In key stage 1, pupils could explain what was meant by words such as 'opinion', 'persuasion' and 'conclusion'. This attention to developing pupils' vocabulary is clearly helping them to make sense of the written word and motivates them to read more.
- Pupils' writing has also improved. On displays around the school there are many examples of well-presented and interesting writing. In several cases, pupils' writing has been inspired by a visit to an historic site, a museum or special event. Indeed, school staff regularly include visits and trips as part of each term's work. This helps to broaden pupils' general knowledge and stimulates their interest in learning and the world beyond Bushbury Hill. In addition, a whole-school 'wicked write' happens every Friday, when pupils write independently and at length in order to apply and practise their writing skills.
- However, this whole-school focus on literacy has led to a reduced focus on some other aspects of teaching and learning. In mathematics, for instance, end-of-key-stage-2 standards have risen but this positive headline masks a few less positive features. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils, which has grown increasingly stronger in reading and writing, has slipped in mathematics. School leaders have been quick to put extra support in place but are not doing all they could to check whether this support is having the desired effect. Furthermore, on occasions, teaching focuses too much on giving pupils instructions and not enough on developing deep understanding. This restricts new learning for the most able and does not help the less able. For instance, during this inspection, key stage 2 pupils were required to complete a number sequence by adding on 25 each time. All the pupils were able to complete the task, but for some it was well within their grasp while others needed to be told exactly what to do in order to complete a worksheet. In either case there was little new learning. Other inspection evidence found that this sort of thing is not commonplace. However, it is clear that, at times, staff overly support pupils to get them through a task or a test and do not necessarily build firm understanding.
- Parents who spoke with me and those who entered free-text responses into Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were supportive of the school's work.

A small number of parents raised concern about pupils' behaviour. This inspection found that pupils' behaviour is managed very well in school. In fact, most of the time, pupils treat others with respect and respond very positively to the school's well-organised system of rewards and consequences. When any incidents of poor behaviour arise, these are managed in calm and constructive ways. Staff are consistent in their approach because leaders provide clear guidance and make sure that it is followed. Lessons run smoothly without disruption and pupils play happily together on the playground. Pupils also know that, if they have any problems or worries, an adult in school is always on hand to listen and help.

- Parents can find out about the school's work and events via information on the school's website. In addition, school leaders are looking for new ways to inform parents about how they can support their children's learning at home. Some pupils, who have been trained as digital ambassadors, put on a presentation for parents about how to stay safe online. Looking ahead, leaders have plans to organise a 'book and a brew' event, when parents can come into school for a cup of tea and a chat about books and ways to encourage healthy reading habits at home. Responses from the school's own recent parental questionnaire indicate that parents welcome these developments. Responses on Parent View also indicate that parents support the school's recent strong stance against some unacceptable parental behaviour that took place on the school's premises.
- In the past 12 months, there have been many changes to the membership of the governing body. As a result, governance has strengthened considerably. Governors understand their roles, take their responsibilities seriously and make effective use of their knowledge and skills. They have put sensible and reliable routines in place to check on the school's work and are informed about recent successes and further areas for development. During this inspection, for example, governors spoke knowledgeably about safeguarding, the positive effect of the primary school sports funding and the school's effective work to improve attendance. Governors are very open about their ambition for the school to improve further but, equally, are proud of its successes to date.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- Continue to improve teaching, especially in mathematics, by making sure that:
  - new work builds securely on previous learning, so that pupils in all classes develop a firm understanding of what is being taught
  - teaching does not rely too heavily on instructions or lead pupils to become overly dependent on adult help to complete tasks
  - they tighten up routines for checking on how well extra support in school is helping targeted pupils to catch up or learn new things.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Wolverhampton. This letter

will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, other members of the leadership team and teaching staff. I also met with four governors and the school's office manager.

I carried out short observations of teaching in different year groups and looked at pupils' work in books and on display. I talked with pupils in lessons and at breaktime and met with a small group to talk about school life and work. I spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

I paid particular attention to several key lines of enquiry. These included: pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics, communication with parents, behaviour, safeguarding and the impact of leadership and management on pupils' progress and attainment.

By the end of the inspection, there were 26 recent responses on Parent View and seven written comments. I took account of these responses and also considered 10 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I looked at several documents, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance, records relating to the work of governors and subject leaders, external reports about the school, information from the school's own checks on teaching and learning, pupils' records and several school policy documents. I also checked the school's website and the procedures for keeping pupils safe.