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Mr Stuart Guest  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Guest

### **Short inspection of Colebourne Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 May 2019, 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 May 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your effective leadership and the importance that you place on your school's values mean that pupils make good progress. Almost without exception, the whole school community is engaged and motivated to do the best by the pupils you serve. One comment made by a pupil represents the voices of many pupils, parents and carers: 'No matter what, they always support you.' As a result, the development and support offered to pupils is raising the aspiration of all to reach higher standards. You ensure that curriculum plans are based on developing core skills alongside a wide range of experiences provided by visits, visitors and other engaging activities. Consequently, pupils are excited about their learning and want to come to school regularly.

Pupils spoke about the school with genuine warmth and enthusiasm. They appreciate the educational visits and leaders' desires for pupils to experience a whole range of activities, both large and small, for example 'jumping over waves', 'flying a paper plane' and 'rolling down a grassy hill'. In addition, you have developed your own set of activities that you aspire for all pupils to have the opportunity to undertake. These experiences effectively support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils behave well, feel safe and unreservedly identify an adult who can help them if they have any difficulties.

Since the previous inspection, school leaders, including governors, have addressed the areas for improvement. By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils

attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics has risen and standards are improving. Consequently, more pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. However, weaknesses in the teaching of writing are preventing a greater proportion reaching the expected and higher standard. This is an area for improvement.

Leaders have developed an effective teamworking ethos and you have high expectations of staff. Staff spoke positively about the training and support opportunities provided. The checks that you carry out on what is happening in classrooms help you to hold subject leaders to account. Subject leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in their areas of responsibility. This knowledge is used to draw up effectively focused improvement plans. You ensure that the non-core subjects have a strong emphasis in the school's curriculum development plans. Further work is needed to ensure that all subjects are taught with the same rigour and balance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Governors visit the school to check on the work of designated leaders of safeguarding. You have invested in providing additional school-based support for vulnerable pupils. You challenge decisions about pupil care and, consequently, pupils are well looked after.

Staff know the specific challenges facing your community and have suitable support in place for those who need it. The pastoral team provides good support for pupils. Your curriculum supports pupils in learning how to keep themselves safe. Through assemblies, discussion time and other activities you effectively prepare pupils for the challenges they may face. Additionally, leaders have invested in training for staff in how to help pupils manage their feelings and emotions. Staff feel supported to deal with and help pupils. Attitudes to school life are built on mutual trust and pupils told me that they feel safe. You have developed an ethos where every adult believes that they should 'never give up'. This means that the pupils in your care get the help that they need at the right time.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have established an effective assessment system that allows them to check on the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders use this information to help pupils catch up where necessary. The actions taken lead to good progress. For example, more pupils are now reaching the expected standard at the end of Reception and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The assessment information gathered by the school is shared with pupils, who demonstrate a clear understanding of their achievements. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned and how they have improved their work. For example, the oldest pupils talk about how they use teachers' guidance to redraft and improve their writing.
- The changes made to the teaching of handwriting and spelling have had a

beneficial impact on the progress pupils make in developing their writing. However, this work is still at an early stage and has so far had limited impact on pupil outcomes. The teaching of spelling and the expectations of pupils' handwriting and sentence construction remain inconsistent across the school. Consequently, pupils who need to catch up and those who could attain the higher standards are not making the progress of which they are capable.

- Subject leaders are mostly effective in their work. They understand their roles and responsibilities well. They are trained well, have accessed subject development programmes and implemented changes enthusiastically. For example, recent changes in the teaching of mathematics have helped pupils solve problems and have led to an increase in the proportion reaching the national average standard in mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Governors play an active role in checking on the work of leaders. As a result of the checks they make, governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors use this knowledge to support leaders to provide appropriate professional development for staff. Staff value the training opportunities provided. Some staff have enrolled on nationally recognised development programmes to further develop their leadership skills.
- Across the foundation subjects, pupils experience a broad, themed curriculum. The range of educational visits, visitors and experiences complement the topics and provide rich stimuli for pupils to talk and write about. However, leaders' checks on the quality of provision in these subjects are still developing. Consequently, the provision in all subjects is not equally developed in terms of range and time dedicated. Not all subjects are delivered with the same balance and rigour.
- The school's curriculum includes opportunities for pupils to acquire and build on information on how to keep themselves safe. The care for pupils provided by the strong pastoral team is effective. This team ensures that pupils and their families receive the support they need at the right time. As a result, fewer families require the support of external agencies.
- Your desire for pupils to attain well is strong. Pupils want to come to school and attendance is good. There has been an improvement in overall attendance and a reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. This improvement has been maintained because pupils do not want to miss out on the learning and extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school, such as the range of sporting opportunities and extra-curricular clubs available.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in writing is improved by raising teachers' expectations of pupils' spelling, handwriting and sentence construction, especially for the most able pupils and those who need to catch up
- checks on the school's curriculum ensure the same quality of provision and balance across all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Kentish  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other leaders and three governors. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to five lessons with you and looked at a range of pupils' books. I spoke to parents and carers at the start of the day and considered the 34 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I considered the responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff questionnaires alongside other school surveys completed.

I scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and documents recoding the findings from your checks on the quality of teaching. I also looked at the school's published information on the website, minutes of governing body meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.