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Mr I Lewis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Lewis

### **Short inspection of Kingsway Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 November 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Since your appointment in 2016, you have dealt with a range of staffing issues which have, historically, limited the pace of school improvement. You are working effectively with your senior leadership team to ensure the development of pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. You share a passion for learning outside the classroom with staff and pupils alike. Teachers create opportunities for pupils, who are involved in a range of engaging activities in and around the woods that are part of your school site. You have planted fruit trees and provide areas for pupils to sit and to study. You are justly proud that the woodland improves the environment for the pupils at a school which is located so close to a motorway.

You are developing further your links with the local authority. An officer provides effective support and has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas where leaders now need to focus their attention.

Governors understand clearly the strategic role that they play. The chair of the governing body analyses the skills of each member of the governing body. The breadth of governors' skills gives a broad base to the increasing level of challenge and support that leaders receive. As a result, the work of governors is increasing the pace of school improvement.

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive about the school. A significant number noted that their children are taught well and make good progress. Pupils were equally supportive, with almost all who responded to the survey saying that they enjoy learning and that their teachers help them to do their best.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to raise the focus on pupils' learning when teaching is being evaluated. You have addressed this issue and ensure that teachers receive clear guidance about improving their practice, following the monitoring of teaching and learning. Additionally, inspectors highlighted the need to improve the progress of children in early years by implementing a more precise system to assess their progress. Some improvement has been made in this area. You have introduced new methods to assess and track pupils' progress. This is having a positive impact on aspects of learning. For example, children's work is beginning to link more closely to their needs. However, improvement has been inconsistent, due to staffing issues in this department, including changes of leadership. As a result, while performance in phonics has improved, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has remained below that seen nationally for some time.

Inspectors also asked the school to improve the quality of teaching even further and increase pupils' progress in key stages 1 and 2 by ensuring that tasks are always hard enough, especially for the most able pupils. This inspection found that there is still more to do to make sure that teaching is of consistent high quality and that pupils make the fastest possible progress.

During the inspection, we also considered areas where further work is required to support the school's improvement. Leaders have put strategies in place to develop pupils' basic skills in reading and mathematics. You identify that further time is required to embed this new way of teaching. Leaders also identify a need to further engage with parents to ensure that they receive the help required to support their children more effectively at home, most notably in mathematics. Additionally, leaders accurately note that handwriting requires further development to ensure a consistent approach to presentation across the school. Finally, further work is required to ensure that governors and senior leaders strengthen the leadership of early years. This is so that children receive suitable challenge and regular assessment of their learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You work effectively with other leaders and the local authority to audit the effectiveness of your procedures for safeguarding, and health and safety. As a result, any issues identified are dealt with quickly. Your site manager and office staff demonstrate vigilance in checking the identity of staff entering the site.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This ensures that they understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Pupils who responded to the Ofsted survey and those spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in saying that they feel safe in school. They have a clear understanding of their role in keeping themselves safe, including when they are online. This is because teachers provide them with regular opportunities to develop their understanding of personal safety. For example, pupils in Year 6 visit members of the emergency services to learn more about safety in the community.

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of this inspection, I shared with you a number of lines of enquiry. The first looked at ways in which leaders are improving the teaching of phonics. There has been a historical decline in pupils' performance in phonics. You reported that staffing disruption in key stage 1 has led to inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics over time. Leaders are addressing these inconsistencies successfully. Working together with teachers, they closely monitor the progress of all pupils through the school's new tracking system. Additional learning, in the form of small-group work and an after-school club, ensures that more pupils catch up. A consistent approach to the teaching of phonics now ensures that progress is swift for all groups of pupils. Further work is now required to make sure that the reading books pupils take home are more closely aligned to the sounds that they learn in school. However, progress is being made. The number of pupils currently in Year 1 who have passed the national phonics screening check has increased considerably.
- The next area examined concerned leaders' work to develop pupils' reading skills in key stages 1 and 2. The teaching of reading takes high priority within the school. Your environment is literacy rich with high-quality books being used as part of displays and made available for pupils in reading corners. Your new library is well stocked and decorated to encourage pupils to read widely. Inspirational quotes such as, 'Today a reader, tomorrow a leader,' make clear to pupils the link that their teachers make between strong reading skills and achievement. As a result of this focus, pupils are engaged and excited by reading and access a broad range of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Teachers throughout the school tie the teaching of writing in to high-quality reading texts. For example, in teaching and learning seen during the inspection, pupils were studying a Shakespearean tragedy. Pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of the storyline and were able to explain the feelings of different characters. The careful lesson planning identified opportunities to help pupils use and understand vocabulary related to the text, such as 'exiled' and 'betrayed.' Pupils' skills in predicting future events and justifying their views developed well, resulting in strong learning taking place. I saw other examples of this kind of approach in the books of pupils from across the school.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils take part in regular, focused reading sessions that develop a range of reading skills. Pupils' work shows a developing understanding of these skills. As a result, progress is being made. Leaders use the new tracking system to identify the progress and attainment of all pupils. Where progress falls

below the school's expectations, additional support is provided. Leaders have identified that, by the end of key stage 2, an increasing proportion of pupils in Year 6 are achieving the school's expectations. This is the case in most other year groups, but not all. Further time is required to fully embed this new system and ensure consistency of teaching across key stages 1 and 2.

- My next line of enquiry considered what leaders are doing to ensure significant improvement in outcomes for pupils by the end of key stage 2. This is because historical data shows underperformance in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have undertaken monitoring of teaching and learning. This has highlighted that the basic skills in these subjects were not being taught in an effective manner.
- Leaders have improved the teaching of basic skills in mathematics by developing planning and teaching methods. This is to ensure that there is an increased focus on problem-solving and enabling pupils to master thoroughly mathematical skill and understanding. Teachers receive support both from within the school and from other schools to develop their teaching skills. This new way of teaching in the school requires further embedding so that it is consistently effective across all classes. However, the school's most recent performance information is encouraging. It shows that the attainment of pupils, including the most able, is improving in most classes.
- Leaders now ensure that there is further time for the teaching of grammar and punctuation skills in English lessons. Good-quality writing tasks enthuse pupils in their learning, as they find the activities interesting. Work in books highlights clear development in skills and understanding of techniques in writing. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to practise these skills effectively in other subjects across the curriculum. In addition, pupils' handwriting is of inconsistent quality in all year groups. There is often no clear development of pupils' handwriting skills.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they strengthen the leadership of early years, so that that strong systems are in place to promote effective teaching, learning and assessment
- they further embed strategies to develop the teaching of reading and mathematics for all groups of pupils across key stages 1 and 2, so that teaching in different classes is of a consistently high quality
- the proportion of pupils attaining the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics increases to reflect more closely attainment seen nationally by the end of key stage 2
- all pupils receive regular opportunities to develop their writing skills, including handwriting, across a range of subjects in the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss issues relating to improving the school. I also met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke with the school's business manager about staff recruitment procedures. I met with senior leaders to discuss pupils' current performance in the school and with you and your deputy safeguarding leader to discuss safeguarding procedures. I also talked on the phone to a representative from the local authority who is providing support to the school. I had a formal discussion with a group of pupils about their personal development, behaviour and welfare, and learning.

Accompanied by you, I visited the Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 classes in the school. I also joined the Nursery and Reception class in the woodland area to observe their learning. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised examples of pupils' work and reviewed documents, including your record of checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. I also examined the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning and current performance information.

Additionally, I considered 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, 34 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 31 responses to Parent View, including 29 additional free-text responses. I also considered information posted on the school's website.