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23 May 2018

Mrs Jane Moore  
Headteacher  
Speedwell Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Moore

### **Short inspection of Speedwell Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 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 October 2013.

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 you took up your post as headteacher in September 2017, you have wasted no time in identifying the strengths of the school and the areas that required further improvement. You have introduced several improvements since that time, but you have also taken great care to maintain the values that staff and governors hold dear, such as the well-established caring and supportive ethos, sharing good practice among staff and welcoming parents into the school.

The governors are highly committed to the school. They know the strengths well and you have their full support in bringing about further improvements where they can benefit the pupils and families that are served by the school.

Pupils engage well with their learning in class. As they move around school, they do so sensibly and quietly. They are polite to visitors and staff and cooperate well with each other as they discuss their learning. Year 2 pupils told me that they enjoy taking responsibility around school, for example organising play equipment at playtime and helping the youngest pupils at lunchtime.

Leaders ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn about the world beyond their local area. Visitors who teach pupils about Asian wedding traditions and

African drummers enable pupils to learn about cultures that may be different from their own. Leaders arrange trips to places such as the seaside, castles and the theatre.

Parents are warmly welcomed at Speedwell Infant School. They can come into school at the start of every day to help settle their child into class. Parents are also invited to attend the assemblies where pupils' achievements are celebrated. You organise events for parents to learn more about how to help their child with learning at home. An attractive display in the school's entrance promotes the school's 'Reading Challenge'. This encourages regular reading at home, with prizes for completing this important task regularly. The vast majority of parents who shared their views with me during the inspection spoke highly of the school. Every parent who responded to the online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to others.

At the time of the last inspection, school leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching. Leaders provided teachers with training to improve their use of questions in the classroom. Teachers have spent time observing each other's practice to learn from each other. Since your arrival, you have continued this work, both within school and further afield by encouraging teachers to visit other schools so that best practice can be brought back to Speedwell Infant School. Staff appreciate the opportunities to improve their practice, including the training you have provided this year. During our tour of the school, however, we saw that not all teachers are consistently using the skills they have learned. This means that some opportunities to address misconceptions and use questions effectively to further pupils' understanding are missed.

Leaders were also asked to increase the proportion of pupils achieving high standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. There have been significant changes to the national curriculum and assessments since that time. Nevertheless, historic published data shows that after the last inspection the proportion of pupils achieving that higher level increased.

In recent years, leaders have developed an approach to assessing pupils' attainment in line with the higher expectations of the national curriculum that was introduced in 2014. Following your arrival, you identified that attainment dipped sharply at the end of Year 2, particularly in English, in 2017. You have worked closely with other school leaders to develop a more in-depth and accurate strategy for teachers to assess pupils' achievements throughout Years 1 and 2. Teachers have been using the new approach in recent months. You hold regular meetings with teachers to check how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics. While you look in detail at the proportion of pupils who are on track to meet the expected and the higher standards, you do not have a strategic overview of the progress pupils make from their starting points.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. You make certain that all the necessary vetting checks take place before an adult starts working, or volunteering, at the school. Staff receive up-to-date training. You keep this important aspect of the school's work at the forefront of everyone's mind through your daily staff briefings.

Leaders keep detailed child protection records securely. You make referrals to external agencies, when this is appropriate, to keep children safe or to offer support to families. Since your arrival you have strengthened the system even further to enable your senior teachers to have immediate access to any new information about pupils. The chair of governors checks safeguarding arrangements regularly.

All pupils who spoke with me said they are safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe when they use modern technology. Pupils say that bullying does not happen often, but when it does, staff deal with it for them. Every parent who responded to Parent View agreed.

## **Inspection findings**

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 2, and the proportion achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check, fell sharply. You have provided training for staff to improve the teaching of phonics and reading. You have purchased new books for the school to support the teaching of phonics and pupils' comprehension skills. You have enabled all pupils to join the local public library. Classes visit the library on a rota basis. Pupils told me they really enjoy this outing and the wide range of books on offer.
- You keep a close check, termly, on the progress pupils in Year 1 are making in their phonics. Your assessments show that more pupils are currently on track to achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 1 than did so in 2017. In class, however, we noticed that while many of the strategies you have introduced to teach phonics are being implemented by staff, this is not consistent across the school. You recognise that there is work to do before the new approaches to teaching early reading are fully embedded.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are below those seen nationally, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. You have maintained the school's well-established rewards to encourage good rates of attendance. The 'attendance tree' is displayed proudly in the entrance corridor to celebrate those pupils with high rates of attendance. You have strengthened the school's approach to working with parents to improve attendance. You speak to parents personally and send letters to parents when a child's attendance is of particular concern. You analyse termly the attendance of pupils. However, attendance is not rising rapidly, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. You are not making use of the pupil premium funding routinely to improve the attendance of this group of pupils.
- Since your arrival, you have reviewed the use of the pupil premium funding. You

have restructured the deployment of teaching assistants to ensure that they have a greater impact on improving standards for pupils who are entitled to benefit from this funding. You have further plans to address other barriers to learning for this group of pupils, but these have yet to be fully implemented. You, and the wider leadership team, including governors, do not fully evaluate the impact of the funding on all the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, current school assessment information indicates that these pupils are achieving almost as well as their peers in English and mathematics.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they analyse more closely the progress that pupils make from their starting points so that they can implement additional support and challenge to ensure that pupils, including those who are the most able, make the progress they should
- they evaluate more precisely the impact of the use of the pupil premium funding so that they can make certain it is used effectively to overcome the barriers to learning for those pupils entitled to benefit from it
- the teaching of early reading is consistently effective throughout the school so that all pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Di Mullan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection, I met with you, a senior teacher and the leader with responsibility for English. I also met with four governors, including the chair of governors. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. Together with you, I observed the learning taking place in every classroom. I spoke with pupils informally in class and looked at their work. I listened to two pupils reading. I scrutinised a range of pupils' books. I examined school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the progress pupils make. I studied the school's self-evaluation document and the school improvement plan. I met formally with a group of pupils and spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. I considered the 28 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the 18 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupils' online survey.