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Mr Paul Sansom
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Sansom

Short inspection of Chad Vale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 April 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You were appointed on 1 January 2015. Since then, the school has expanded significantly. Extensive building work has taken place to accommodate the increase in the number of pupils on roll. Leaders, including a very able governing body, have effectively managed these changes and continued to drive the school forward. You and the staff have ensured that a palpable ethos of care and mutual respect remains at the heart of everything that the school does.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive and hold you and the staff in very high regard. During the inspection, many parents praised you for being 'highly visible, available to listen and quick to respond to any concerns'. They shared many personal examples of how children with particular needs or abilities are welcomed and supported. Parents' comments included:

'This school has created an inclusive culture for the children which reflects the diversity of the city we live in. Staff live and breathe the Chad Vale values and work well over the job description to ensure that children achieve their best.'

At the previous inspection, you were charged with increasing opportunities for children in the Reception class to learn through well-planned outdoor activities. Leaders and early years staff have focused relentlessly on this. The outdoor provision is attractive and now used well to enhance children's learning and

development. There are many opportunities for children to share and develop their own ideas. Staff encourage children to 'have a go'. As a result, children demonstrate good communication skills, self-confidence and a love of learning. This was captured well by the Reception children who invited me to: 'Come and see how much we love our learning. We dance, we paint and we listen to music and sing.'

Your collaborative approach to professional development enables teachers and leaders to work together and learn from effective practice. You have good links with the local teaching school. Teachers value the range of professional development available. You are very aware of teachers' workload when introducing new systems or teaching approaches. Teachers who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, and those who spoke to me during the inspection, feel very well supported.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You are relentless in your determination to follow through every concern. You work closely with other agencies that protect children and you do not leave anything to chance. Your records and day-to-day notes are well organised and detailed.

Staff training is up to date and records are frequently checked. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are fully aware of their responsibilities and how to recognise signs that might suggest that a pupil is at risk. Parents are confident that you and the staff place the care and well-being of the pupils at the heart of the school. Many parents praised this aspect of the school when responding to the Ofsted online questionnaire.

Pupils talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. The safeguarding posters and prompts on display in corridors and classrooms are a day-to-day reminder, both for pupils and for staff. Pupils speak about the need to 'stop and think' if they feel uncertain about a situation. They know what to do, and who to go to, if they feel worried or concerned.

Inspection findings

- You and the governing body are rightly proud of the standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 6. In 2017, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics continued to be higher than the standards expected nationally. The proportions of pupils reaching higher standards were also above those seen nationally in reading and mathematics. However, you are aware that, behind these strong attainment figures, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable and so fail to reach greater depth, particularly in writing. My first line of enquiry was to check what you are doing to ensure that pupils, from different starting points, make the best possible progress in writing across key stage 1.
- Improving pupils' progress in writing and providing challenge for the middle- and higher-ability groups are top priorities on your school development plan. You have taken a range of actions to address this. You have reorganised the way that

you teach phonics in the early years and key stage 1. Leaders have organised training and support to improve phonics teaching. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved further and was above the national average.

- Teachers encourage pupils to use their knowledge of phonics when they write. In the Reception Year, children learn to form letters correctly and to understand that writing carries meaning. They practise their writing skills in many different contexts, including the outdoor mud kitchen and the construction area. Teachers have high expectations. They use every opportunity to model and promote the skills of good writing. Leaders ensure that the most able young writers are challenged to think hard and use and apply their writing skills carefully.
- Teaching is not consistently good as pupils move into key stage 1. You have plans in place to address this. It is too early to see the impact of your actions.
- A second focus of this inspection was to review the actions you are taking to raise the achievement of the small number of disadvantaged pupils. It is clear that you have a very accurate picture of the learning needs of these pupils. You have identified any potential barriers to learning. Individual support plans are in place. These include support for the most able disadvantaged pupils to ensure that they are challenged to work at greater depth. Staff are clear about their accountabilities. Our review of current work in books showed that disadvantaged pupils are making at least the same progress as other pupils and often better.
- My final focus for this inspection was to evaluate the breadth of subjects in the curriculum. The website provides limited information about this. However, in school, there were many examples of how pupils study and enjoy a range of interesting subjects and topics. For example, pupils were proud of their work on Beowulf, the Vikings and Ancient Egypt. Many pupils told me that they enjoy science and physical education. Teachers understand and use the assessment and tracking systems effectively across all subjects. This is a priority in your school development plan and your work is ongoing.
- We reviewed your school self-evaluation and school development plan. These documents provide an accurate summary of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, you recognise that the school development plan does not contain focused actions, clear targets and timescales. As a result, you cannot readily evaluate the impact of your improvement actions against your priorities. Consequently, governors cannot easily judge where things are working well and how quickly the school is moving towards outstanding.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers recognise and respond to pupils who are capable of writing at greater depth, particularly across key stage 1
- the school development plan contains focused actions, clear targets and timescales so that you, and governors, can easily evaluate the impact of improvement actions against the school priorities.

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

Marilyn Mottram
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. I also met with the chair and the vice chair of the governing body. I spoke with pupils informally during the day. I made short visits to classrooms with you and your deputy headteacher. We reviewed samples of pupils' work, as well as the school's assessment systems and curriculum information. I analysed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and documents relating to safeguarding. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. I took account of the 78 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online survey and the 80 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.