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Mr Alan Brown
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Brown

Short inspection of Oldfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 September 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is despite considerable staff changes over that time. With the support of a dedicated deputy headteacher, you provide strong leadership and a clear sense of direction for your school. You know precisely what the strengths and weaknesses of your school are. With the aid of a well-informed governing body, you are focusing on the right priorities for improvement. Morale among the staff is high. All those who completed the online questionnaire say that they enjoy working at the school and are proud to do so. They feel respected and supported and say that they are treated fairly and considerately by effective leaders and managers.

Parents hold the school in high regard. Every parent who completed the online questionnaire said that the school is well led and managed and would recommend the school to others. This reflects the very positive views of the parents who spoke to me. The pupils who I met told me how much they enjoy coming to school. They were very enthusiastic about the wide range of activities available to them in and outside the classroom.

At the time of the last inspection, the behaviour of pupils drew high praise. This continues to be a very positive feature of the school. Pupils work with enthusiasm and concentration in classrooms and enjoy their playtimes. The pupils who I spoke to said that their learning is rarely interrupted by others' misbehaviour. Pupils relate well to each other, to their teachers and other adults and are happy to engage in

conversation with visitors. I was particularly impressed to see how quickly the youngest children have settled into the school and have mastered its routines.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to: provide more opportunities for early years children to develop numeracy and literacy skills, especially in the outdoor area; ensure work is well presented; give teachers the opportunity to observe and learn from others; develop the role of subject leaders; and to ensure that the needs of the most able pupils are met. You have been successful in implementing almost all these recommendations, but we agreed that there is further work to be done on meeting the needs of most-able pupils.

You responded to the last inspection by changing the way that your early years provision is organised and managed, to put more focus on numeracy and literacy. During my visit, I saw children involved in a range of activities designed to develop their reading, writing, counting and shape-sorting skills. The equipment in the outside area had been very thoughtfully arranged to support this learning. Another change you have made in the light of the previous inspection report is to the handwriting policy. This has had a positive impact. The books that I saw were well presented and reflected the pupils' pride in their work.

A distinctive feature of your school is the close partnership that you have established with a range of schools in the region. This enables your staff to collaborate with colleagues from other schools on planning programmes of work, organising projects, comparing pupils' work, discussing standards and sharing ideas and approaches to teaching. You also provide considerable opportunities for teachers to work in teams within your own school. As a result, they are able to reflect on and refine their own practice. You have moved away from individual subject leaders to subject teams so that all staff have opportunities to apply and develop their subject knowledge and to contribute to the leadership and management of the school. Staff are very appreciative of such opportunities for development.

You have had variable success in meeting the needs of the most able pupils. The proportions of pupils who reach the expected standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2 are generally in line with or above the national averages. However, in both key stages, the proportions gaining greater depth or higher levels of understanding have tended to be below average, particularly in writing and mathematics. You are very aware of this and are putting renewed effort into addressing this issue.

Safeguarding is effective.

All the parents who completed the online questionnaire or who spoke to me said that their children are safe at school. The pupils who I met confirmed that they are safe. They told me that they are taught road safety and how to keep themselves safe near water or in the case of a fire. They understand the potential dangers of social media and the internet and know what to do if they come across any unsuitable material. There is occasional bullying in the school, but this is dealt with quickly and effectively. These pupils had not encountered any racist bullying. If they

have any worries or concerns, they contact staff, who give them prompt support and help. The 'buddy' system, where older pupils support younger ones, is an important means of maintaining the safe and happy atmosphere in the school. The pupils who I spoke to did not recall being taught about rail safety at the school. Therefore, this is an area for improvement, especially in view of the location of the school.

You have clear systems for checking on the suitability of adults to work with children. The school site is secure and access to the building is carefully controlled. On the day of the inspection, you knew the precise whereabouts of each pupil who was absent. Staff have attended the necessary training in safeguarding. The ones I spoke to knew how to identify possible signs of abuse and what they should do if they had any concerns about the welfare of a child.

During my visit, I noticed several cars that were clearly exceeding the speed limit as they went past the school. You and your colleagues confirmed that, despite your efforts to deal with this issue, speeding cars are a continuing problem for the school.

Inspection findings

- The proportion of early years children achieving a good level of development was above average in 2015 and 2016 but fell to below average in 2017. I was interested to know the reasons for this and whether the situation has been rectified. You showed me how the decline in 2017 resulted from the personal circumstances of some children in that year group. In 2018, the figure rose once again to above average. Therefore, the decline has been arrested.
- Results in the phonics screening in Year 1 have been consistently high. I wanted to know whether this good performance is being maintained. You showed me that it is. Results in summer 2018 were once again above average. The pupils from Years 1 and 2 who read to me did so with considerable fluency and had secure strategies for deciphering any unfamiliar words.
- Results for seven-year-olds at your school have been generally positive. However, in 2017 there was a decline in mathematics where the proportions achieving the expected standard and greater depth of understanding fell below average. We discussed the reasons for this and whether the situation has improved. You demonstrated how results in 2017 were affected by the nature of that particular group of pupils. In summer 2018, the proportion reaching the expected standard in mathematics rose to the previous level. However, there was a further decline in the proportion achieving greater depth of understanding.
- A fourth area that I explored with you was the performance of 11-year-olds. The proportions of pupils reaching the expectations for their age have been consistently above average for reading, writing and mathematics but more variable where the higher standards and greater depth of understanding are concerned. In 2018, reading results rose to above average on both measures. In writing and mathematics, the proportions achieving the expected level improved further. However, the portion achieving the higher standard of understanding in

mathematics declined. You have responded very promptly to this. You have conducted a detailed analysis of the results to identify the precise areas of underperformance and you have arranged to work with consultants to focus specifically on the areas in need of improvement.

- Behaviour and attendance have been traditionally strong in your school. I wanted to know whether this remains the case. You were able to provide convincing proof of this.
- The final area we examined was the organisation of your curriculum. You and your colleagues were able to demonstrate that the school covers the full range of the national curriculum and ensures continuity and development in pupils' learning within individual subjects. Performance in science is strong. Your pupils' experiences are greatly enriched by involvement in large-scale projects, with other schools, on themes such as conservation and diversity. You also offer them a wide range of sporting activities, visits and residential experiences.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the actions taken to increase the challenge to the most able pupils are effective in raising standards further
- pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe near railway lines
- they work with the police, the council and the local community to address the problem of speeding cars that pose a threat to pupils' safety.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I examined a range of documentation and discussed your self-evaluation with you and the deputy headteacher. I met the vice-chair of the governing body and two governors and spoke to a local authority representative. I discussed the curriculum with you and subject coordinators. Together with the deputy headteacher, we visited lessons to observe teaching and look at books. The three of us also discussed behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. I met eight pupils, chosen at random from key stage 2 and spoke to staff and pupils as I walked round the school. I examined the 22 responses to the staff survey and the 46 responses to 'Parent View'. I also spoke to 16 parents as they brought their children to school.