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Carol McQuiggin
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Dear Ms McQuiggin

Short inspection of Lawley Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Lawley Primary School is an inclusive and cohesive community, which clearly reflects the school's motto, 'Discovery unites us'. You and the deputy headteacher, together with the governing body, provide strong and effective leadership. Leaders have successfully monitored, trained and supported staff to maintain good teaching across the school. In addition, you and the staff team plan and provide a stimulating and creative curriculum, which enlivens and interests pupils.

The school is a vibrant and positive learning community. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and very well behaved learners. The staff value pupils' work and efforts, which is reflected in the high quality of displays in classrooms and corridors around the school. The work displayed and in pupils' books reflects good achievement across all subjects of the curriculum. This includes pupils' creative and fine art, imaginary and descriptive writing, illustrations and accounts of special science projects, as well as a wide range of special events, project work and educational visits. Many pupils told me that school activities, special events, visits and lessons inspire and motivate them to succeed and enjoy their education. All the pupils I spoke to told me that they very much enjoy coming to school. The vast majority of parents I spoke with and those responding to the online questionnaire, Parent View, paid tribute to you and your staff for the quality of care, welfare and education provided for their children.

We discussed some key lines of enquiry during the inspection, including those that you and your leadership team identified through your accurate self-evaluation. You and the deputy headteacher recognise, rightly, that pupils could still be achieving better in mathematics. Current assessments and last year's national test results show that you are increasing the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding age-related standards in mathematics. However, we noticed during lesson observations and from some of the work in pupils' books that pupils do not routinely explain how they calculate number problems. During observations of teaching, I could see that teachers are increasingly planning more challenging problem-solving tasks. This needs to continue, especially for the most able pupils who are capable of learning in greater depth.

You and the deputy headteacher lead by example and are very good at identifying the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching. Your focus on questioning in lessons has sharpened the way in which teachers and support staff interact with pupils. We saw some good examples of the ways in which teachers manage class and group discussions. There is scope now to develop this further, especially in mathematics lessons. Teachers and support staff question pupils about number problems, but some do not probe further to identify gaps or misunderstandings.

You may recall the other areas we explored together, including the teaching of phonics in key stage 1 and the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Your accurate and moderated assessment information confirms that teachers and support staff teach phonics very well. I was particularly impressed by the consistent methods being used by all the classes we visited. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were clearly on task and making rapid progress blending letter sounds and combinations of letters to read unfamiliar words. The pupils in both Years 1 and 2 were particularly excited about some of the 'nonsense words' they were reading and could tell me which words were 'real words' and which were not. You and the staff team have successfully adapted and refined the way you teach phonics. Assessments show that disadvantaged pupils and those who are not disadvantaged make rapid progress developing early reading and writing skills, including spelling and punctuation.

The children in both Reception classes achieve very well. Our brief visit and analysis of the most recent and current national assessments show that the large majority of children reach a good level of development in all areas of learning. Early reading and writing is taught very well. I could see from the sample of workbooks I checked that the early years experiences offered to children gets them off to an excellent start in preparation for Year 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders, governors and staff ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a vigilant and effective culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Leaders and governors review staff vetting procedures and policies systematically. The electronic visitor checking-in system is efficient and robust.

Teaching, support and administrative staff are well trained and vigilant. Governors and staff carry out regular reviews of safeguarding and child protection policies and risk assessments of school activities and educational visits. The safety, security and well-being of children in the foundation stage are managed by well-qualified and skilled staff. The vast majority of parents that I spoke, with and those responding by questionnaire, email or text to Ofsted's regional office, agreed that pupils are safe in school. Parents believe, rightly, that their children are very well cared for by the staff.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching has improved well since the previous inspection. You and the deputy headteacher accurately monitor lessons and pupils' work in books. Staff feel very well supported.
- Last year's national assessments and current work and progress information show that pupils reach high standards in reading by the end of key stage 2. Standards last year were above average in writing and in line with the national average in mathematics. Standards in mathematics are on track to be higher this year compared with last year's figures.
- The current focus on mathematics is set out very clearly in the school's strategic plan. This needs to continue as there are early signs of a positive impact on pupils' learning. We discussed how leaders and staff need to focus particularly on the teaching of mathematics.
- Evidence from pupils' work in books shows that they do not get enough or regular opportunities to explain the calculation methods they use when solving problems. You and the deputy headteacher are right to focus on improving teachers' questioning in lessons. In mathematics, this includes sharpening the way adults question and assess what pupils know and understand in order to identify and address gaps or misunderstandings.
- The large majority of children join the school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age in the Reception Year. They make rapid progress in early literacy and mathematics. This lays strong foundations for the children when they start key stage 1. This is reflected in last year's national assessments, which show that pupils reached above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- At a very early stage, Reception children enjoy trying out their early writing skills independently. The effective teaching of phonics enables children to identify combinations of letters and to sound these out while forming and writing words. This consistent practice extends into Years 1 and 2 so that reading and writing skills develop well from the early years throughout key stage 1 and through key stage 2.
- There is a real sense of achievement promoted by the staff and in pupils' excellent work displayed in corridors and classrooms. You and the staff team promote high expectations for behaviour and learning. British values of democracy, fairness and acceptance of all faiths, cultures and backgrounds form the bedrock of the school's core values. The 'pupil parliament' is an

excellent example of this, and one 'member of parliament' told me: 'We visited the Houses of Parliament in London. It was great to see how this works.'

- Pupils like coming to school because of the broad and stimulating curriculum that you and the other staff provide. Their enjoyment of school is also reflected in high attendance rates and low levels of persistent absenteeism. Pupils feel safe and very well looked after. This includes the large number of pupils who attend the excellently organised and managed morning club, who were very positive when sharing their thoughts with me over breakfast.
- Pupils benefit academically and personally from experiencing a range of stimulating projects and subjects. These include studying the historical context of famous battles; learning to speak French; investigating the impact of changing world climates in science and geography; communal singing and music playing; and studying and exploring 'human rights' and famous people in the past, such as the civil rights leader, Mahatma Gandhi, and others, who fought for justice and freedom, leading to international charters and a universal declaration of human rights.
- Pupils also make rapid progress developing their reading and writing skills when experiencing a range of genres of literature. The curriculum is enriched by high-quality creative and fine art, including some excellent examples of pupils' writing and artwork, inspired by the visit of professional artists, illustrators and authors.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to focus on improving pupils' achievement in mathematics by:
 - making sure that teachers and support staff check what pupils know and understand during lessons, to make sure that there are no gaps or misunderstanding before moving their learning on
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to explain the methods they use when calculating number problems.

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

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

In addition to meeting with you and the deputy headteacher, I spoke with the chair of the governing body by telephone and met with a school improvement adviser. You and I visited parts of lessons in both Reception classes and in Years 1 to 5. I observed part of a whole-school music assembly and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in books in Year 6, because both classes were attending a week's residential visit at the time of the inspection. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. I also considered the views of 101 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also reviewed the comments of 47 parents', sent to Ofsted during the inspection by text or email. I spoke to teaching, clerical and support staff during the inspection and reviewed the 22 responses from staff to the online Ofsted questionnaire. I spoke to many pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. We looked at and discussed pupils' work in books while observing lessons. I took account of the latest assessment of the school's effectiveness undertaken by a school improvement adviser. I analysed the results from the most recent national tests and current teacher assessments. My analysis focused on: pupil outcomes in the Reception Year; phonic screening test results in Years 1 and 2; and assessments of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6. I scrutinised and discussed with you the school's self-evaluation and the school's strategic plan, and considered the latest minutes of governor meetings and headteacher reports to the governing body. I met with a group of pupils during breakfast club to seek their views about the school. I checked staff vetting and safeguarding procedures to determine whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.