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Mrs Sharon Joyce
Headteacher
Swinton Queen Primary School
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Dear Mrs Joyce

Short inspection of Swinton Queen Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 May 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 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.**

The school provides a positive learning environment. You, the trust and the local governing body are keen to bring about improvement in the weaker aspects of performance.

The last inspection report asked you to improve pupils' reading comprehension. However, in 2018 attainment in reading was below average at the end of key stages 1 and 2. The key stage 2 tests showed that pupils' progress in reading was well below average.

The recent actions you have taken have improved the teaching of reading. Pupils are working purposefully to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to consolidate their phonic skills. Teachers are teaching specific reading skills supported by new learning resources. This methodical, whole-school approach is helping pupils to develop their vocabulary and build their comprehension skills.

Pupils appreciate the new and more challenging class novels. They value the more up-to-date range of books in the library. They like the quiet time to read in class. They are enjoying reading more books. Pupils are excited by the visits from authors.

They respond well to the reading competitions. Most-able pupils have benefited from joining a reading group.

Purposeful and productive learning in lessons shows that these strategies have begun to increase pupils' enjoyment and skills in reading. Pupils and parents made positive comments about the improvements you have made in reading.

The last inspection report also asked you to improve pupils' standards of spelling. Standards of spelling remain below the national average. In the last year, you have introduced a wider range of resources and activities which are engaging pupils in learning how to spell.

The last inspection report asked you to improve the achievement of the most able pupils. You recognise that too few pupils attain the high standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. In the last year, you have focused more accurately on challenging the most able. You have raised expectations by working more precisely on what pupils need to do to achieve the high standard. You have provided additional targeted support for the most able in upper key stage 2. These approaches are having a positive impact on the most able pupils' learning.

In 2018, key stage 2 outcomes were below average in reading and mathematics. This was a surprise to both you and the trust. The trust has acted this year to strengthen systems of accountability, to improve the analysis of data and to identify the needs of schools more promptly. Your self-evaluations do not focus sharply enough on the progress pupils are making to identify and act on weakness in teaching and learning.

You have not made enough use of best practice within the trust to ensure consistently strong performance in different subjects and aspects of school provision.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Recruitment checks meet requirements. Leaders carefully record safeguarding concerns, actions and meetings. You act promptly when concerns arise. Staff liaise effectively with families and external agencies. Leaders seek advice appropriately from other safeguarding professionals and take proper steps to involve other agencies.

Leaders have taken appropriate measures to ensure that children are safeguarded effectively with careful assessment of individual needs, medical risks and risks of indoor and outdoor activities. Staff have a caring and proactive approach to supporting pupils who may be vulnerable or at risk.

Parents say their children are safe. Pupils are confident to talk to adults in school if they have a problem. Pupils have learned how to stay safe on the internet and know that it is important to avoid revealing personal information online.

Inspection findings

- In 2018, pupils' progress in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below average due to a weakness in reasoning. You have provided staff training to improve pupils' use of reasoning in mathematics. You have increased the use of practical resources to develop mathematical understanding. More frequent practice of times tables is strengthening pupils' arithmetical knowledge and basic skills. You are helping some pupils to keep up with the rest of the class by giving them extra support straight after the lesson. Pupils sometimes lack the tools and resilience to work out the meaning of a mathematical question and how to provide a reasoned answer.
- In writing, staff are providing better challenge for the most able pupils by using demanding whole-class novels as a stimulus for writing and by providing more opportunities for pupils to write independently without prescribed guidance.
- In the early years, staff tackle weaknesses in children's communication, language and literacy by developing their ability to tell stories, answer questions and improve their spoken grammar and use of tenses. Parents stay in school and learn how staff teach phonics. This is helping parents to support children's early reading. In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils that met the required standard in phonics was at the national average. Staff are working harder to ensure that pupils who did not meet the standard catch up by the end of Year 2.
- Leaders are considering how to increase the involvement of parents to promote reading at home and school, including the use of the pupil reading record.
- Leaders of English, mathematics and the early years have a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses and are monitoring the impact of new strategies well.
- The local governing body recognises the weaker aspects of school performance. Governors have a methodical approach to monitoring leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Governors have a good first-hand knowledge of teaching and learning and its impact on pupils' reading.
- Staff use an appropriate range of strategies for pupils with low attendance. Staff work closely with families to help them get their children to school and on time. Persistent absence was above the national average last year and is similar this year. Staff promote attendance with rewards and regular information about levels of attendance in each class. However, attendance remains below the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the implementation of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning results in good progress at key stage 2, with more pupils attaining the high standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2

- the trust and senior leaders monitor and evaluate thoroughly, analyse data sharply and take prompt action to ensure that pupils make sustained good progress
- leaders make effective use of best practice within the trust to improve aspects of teaching, learning and attendance.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Rotherham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body, the interim chief executive officer of the trust and two groups of pupils. I jointly observed the teaching of reading with you and listened to some pupils read.

I checked the school website and examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school plans, safeguarding records and attendance information. I took account of the 22 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, including the 16 written responses and one letter. I also considered the five responses to the Ofsted online staff survey and the 11 responses to the pupil survey.