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Mrs Juli Copley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Copley

Short inspection of Radleys Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 March 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 the school was judged to be good in March 2015.

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.**

You and school leaders are aspirational for pupils. You are clear about what needs to improve. However, the school's self-evaluation is too generous and does not demonstrate accurately enough the impact of leaders' actions. Although standards remain low, the school is on a journey of improvement. You have taken positive steps to address the areas that need to improve. For example, you access support from other schools to make improvements in areas such as writing. In conjunction with the local authority, you have established short-term action plans and specific targets which are monitored closely. Currently, some initiatives are at an early stage and are yet to show significant impact.

You and school leaders have responded to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, these have not been addressed fully and are still a work in progress. For example, pupils do not use and apply their mathematical skills sufficiently in reasoning and problem solving.

Since the last inspection, there has been a number of staff changes. Many staff are new to the school and are developing in their roles. The new staff team is keen to improve teaching and learning and raise attainment for pupils. You have sought support from other schools and specialist leaders of education to provide

professional development and training for staff. Teachers are now being held to account more rigorously for the progress that pupils make through regular pupil progress meetings. You are checking the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously. Staff receive clear feedback about how to develop their practice to raise standards. Staff, especially those at the beginning of their careers, appreciate the professional development, feedback and support they receive.

Governors are committed to, and supportive of the school. They have audited their skills to ensure that they have a breadth of expertise to draw on. Governors are beginning to develop their roles further so that they can establish a more strategic approach to monitoring the work of leaders and the impact of their actions. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and monitors progress against the school's action plan.

The vast majority of parents and carers hold positive views of the school. They say their children are safe, happy and are well looked after. Comments such as 'Teachers care' reflected the views of many. The school works hard to engage parents through workshops in reading and writing. A recent writing workshop was well attended by parents who appreciated the opportunity to work alongside their children and support them in their learning.

Pupils are polite and well behaved and most demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Sometimes pupils are not sufficiently focused or challenged in their learning. Consequently, some lose interest and become distracted. This results in a reduction in learning time for some pupils and slows their progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders follow appropriate procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and the reporting of concerns. Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern about a child. There is a culture of vigilance towards safeguarding so that staff do not hesitate to report the smallest concerns. Staff know how to escalate concerns further, if necessary. Governors check that the school meets safeguarding requirements.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say, 'Teachers keep us safe and are there for us.' They know that if they have a worry or a concern, an adult will listen to them.

Inspection findings

- Over time, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has improved, especially in writing and mathematics. However, it remains below the national average in reading. In 2018, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was well below the national average at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Additional funding is used to provide targeted interventions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as an online

intervention programme that addresses basic skills. Funding also supports the post of a family support worker, provides school uniform, places at breakfast club, and support for school trips. Leaders know pupils and families well and ensure that they receive support at the right time. The family support worker works closely with vulnerable families and greater numbers are now supported. A child counsellor and a social mentor also provide support for the most vulnerable pupils.

- The needs of pupils with SEND are now more accurately identified. Leaders have established an inclusion team to address the needs of vulnerable pupils more specifically. Barriers for learning are identified for individual pupils, and key adults are identified to support them. Staff have received training, for example in behaviour management.
- Leaders use additional funding such as the pupil premium appropriately and as a result, progress is improving for disadvantaged pupils. However, you have not established a strategic overview that allows leaders or governors to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of how this funding is spent specifically. This means that governors are not able to hold leaders to account as well as they might.
- Although pupils make progress in line with the national average by the end of key stage 2, attainment is well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Over time, there is a rising trend in pupils' progress and attainment, but standards remain low in early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. Leaders account for the low standards in 2018 as a result of a high number of pupils with additional needs in these particular cohorts. However, over time, pupils do not achieve high enough standards because there is inconsistency in the quality of teaching and sometimes teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- In mathematics, for example, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in problem solving and reasoning. In English, pupils are provided with resources to help them in their learning but these are not used routinely to move learning forward. The quality of pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation is inconsistent. Some pupils are not supported well enough in their learning and move on to more difficult work before they have secured basic skills and understanding. Some teachers do not build on pupils' prior learning and focus specifically on what pupils need to learn next. The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently and this limits the progress that these pupils make. Leaders recognise that progress must be stronger for attainment to improve further.
- In early years, children work together well in a pleasant environment. Positive relationships exist between staff and children. Children settle well to activities. Children have a range of opportunities to practise their phonics, writing and counting. For example, adults help children to sequence pictures to write a story. Children recognise initial sounds in words and some children are beginning to apply their phonics to write phonetically plausible words in simple sentences. On occasion, however, learning is not sufficiently structured and focused so that children develop their skills well enough.

- Over time, pupils' attendance has declined and persistent absence has risen to above the national average. Leaders now take a more rigorous approach to tackling poor attendance and as a result, it is improving. The rate of persistent absence has fallen to below the national average.
- Behaviour has improved because teachers have high expectations of how pupils conduct themselves. Leaders record and monitor the number of behaviour incidents carefully. Pupils who need additional help to manage their own behaviour are well supported. Pupils' 'proud books' have a positive impact and contribute effectively to pupils' self-esteem and confidence because these records reinforce positive behaviour.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's self-evaluation is rigorous and improvement plans focus clearly on the difference they will make to pupils
- there are clear strategies and evaluations for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- teachers build on pupils' prior learning effectively and ensure that pupils' understanding is secure before moving them on in their learning
- teachers help pupils to make effective use of the resources provided to help them in their learning
- teachers provide greater challenge for pupils in reasoning and problem solving in mathematics
- teachers have consistently high expectations for pupils' spelling, handwriting and the presentation of work
- in early years, there is a clear learning purpose to children's activities.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Cameron
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the family liaison worker and the chair of governors. I spoke to a representative of the local authority

by telephone. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the 16 written comments and one voicemail message. I also considered the 20 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 22 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

I scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the single central record, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, the minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding information and records of behaviour.

I visited classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher and looked at pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics. I observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day. I spoke to pupils informally in lessons and met with a group of pupils formally to discuss their views of the school.