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Mrs Rachael Nicholls
Headteacher
Shavington Primary School
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Dear Mrs Nicholls

Short inspection of Shavington Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in 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 provide strong leadership and a clear sense of direction for the school and enjoy the support of a committed team of senior and middle leaders. You and your staff have a shared vision for the school, based on 'educating pupils for life' and instilling in them the qualities of 'resilience, resourcefulness, reflection and reciprocity'. You celebrate the school's strengths but also have a precise understanding of the improvements that need to be made. You are not afraid to change your practice where it is not being effective and are rigorous in checking on the impact of any new approaches you adopt. As a result, you have made clear improvements, for example in raising standards in key stage 1 and in improving the performance of the most able pupils.

The members of the local advisory board know the school well. They visit the school regularly and hold discussions with the staff responsible for the subjects and areas to which they are linked. The directors and members also have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. They provide leaders with the autonomy necessary to run the school effectively while, at the same time, holding them rigorously to account. The school makes good use of the expertise within the multi-academy trust to share good practice. Communications within the school and between the school and parents and carers are good. However, the school's website is incomplete.

Morale is high. Staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to do so. They say that the school is well led and managed. They receive good support from leaders and managers and are treated fairly, considerately and with respect. Parents hold you and your colleagues in high regard. They have confidence in your leadership and almost all would recommend the school to others. The parents I met were pleased with the good communication between home and school and with the care that all staff show towards their children.

You place considerable emphasis on developing the expertise of staff to meet the school's needs. This is evident, for example, in the additional training that specific staff have received in identifying and supporting pupils with dyslexia, in bereavement counselling and in providing support with speech and language development.

Pupils behave in an orderly and polite manner. They relate well to each other, to teachers and other adults. In lessons, they settle quickly to their tasks and work with interest and concentration. The pupils who spoke to me said that their learning is rarely interrupted by others' misbehaviour.

The curriculum is planned well and is enriched by a range of additional activities which the pupils find interesting. You place appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of British values. We discussed ways in which pupils' understanding of a range of faiths and cultures could be extended further.

Safeguarding is effective.

All the teachers and almost all the parents who responded to the online surveys were confident that children are safe at the school. The pupils I met said that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. They also feel safe on the way to and from school. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe near roads, railways and water and they know what to do and where to go in the case of a fire. They know about the potential dangers of social media and the internet and what to do if they come across unsuitable material. Pupils say that there is some bullying at the school, but this is dealt with quickly and effectively. None of them had encountered any racist bullying. They know which staff to contact if they have any worries or concerns and are confident that they will receive appropriate help where necessary.

You have conducted appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work with children. The school site is secure and access to the buildings is carefully controlled. Appropriate measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors during the extensive building programme that is taking place.

You and your staff work very closely with a range of relevant external agencies to provide support for pupils and families who need additional help. You also have several colleagues who have been specially trained to ensure pupils' social, emotional and mental well-being.

You have a stringent system to ensure that all staff are aware of which children have specific allergies and know what to do to support those pupils. Staff have also been trained in first-aid and paediatric first-aid and know what to do in the case of specific types of emergency.

Inspection findings

- Children's results in the early years have generally been above average. I wanted to know whether this level of performance is being maintained. Provisional figures show that the proportion of children who reached a good level of development in summer 2018 was lower than the previous year but still broadly average. When these children started school, your assessments identified that many of them lacked the skills typical for their age and therefore would need additional support to be well prepared for key stage 1. The strategies you adopted enabled these children to make good progress. The additional work on shape and space was particularly successful in improving boys' performance. Through careful analysis, you have identified that the children currently in the early years need further support with language and communication. Two of your teaching assistants have additional qualifications in speech and language. Therefore, you are providing early help in school to children who might otherwise have to be referred to a speech and language therapist. As a result, these children have made good progress since starting in Nursery.
- The phonics results for pupils at the end of Year 1 were below average in 2016 but above average in 2017. I was interested to know whether this improvement is being maintained. You explained that, following disappointing results in 2015, you changed your approach to teaching phonics. This included introducing phonics in the Nursery, working more closely with parents and giving additional support to boys. This led to clear improvements. Although results in the phonics screening check in summer 2018 were not as good as in the previous year, they were still high. This was with a cohort that was almost twice the size of previous year groups. Your analysis of pupils currently in the school shows that their command of phonics continues to be strong. The pupils who read to me had very clear strategies for deciphering unfamiliar words and were making good progress.
- The third area that I explored with you was pupils' performance in key stage 1. The proportions of seven-year-olds reaching expected levels have tended to be above average. However, the proportions achieving a greater depth of understanding have been very low, with none doing so in writing or mathematics in 2017. I wanted to know whether this situation has improved. You explained that, following the discussions with external moderators, you and your staff had put greater focus on providing all pupils, but particularly the most able, with greater challenges. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieved greater depth of understanding increased considerably in 2018, particularly in mathematics. The work seen shows that the level of challenge for pupils currently in key stage 1 continues to be high and they are progressing well.
- For the last two years, the performance of 11-year-olds in writing has been lower than in reading and mathematics. We discussed what the school has done about this. You explained that you and your colleagues have totally revamped the

English policy to ensure greater consistency and continuity of approach across the school. You have also introduced a new handwriting policy. The impact of this is beginning to be seen in the analysis you have conducted of the progress of pupils currently in key stage 2.

- From the information on the school's website, I was not entirely sure how you organise your curriculum. From a meeting with middle leaders and an examination of documentation, I was able to see that your curriculum is carefully thought through, is based on clear principles that are shared across the school and is designed to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning across the full range of the national curriculum. It is enriched by a range of additional activities which the pupils told me they find interesting and enjoyable. Your curriculum places appropriate emphasis on developing British values. You agreed that there is further work to be done to extend pupils' understanding of a range of faiths and cultures.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils develop their knowledge of a wide range of faiths and cultures, in order to extend their understanding of life in modern Britain
- the school's website fulfils requirements by including complete and up-to-date information on the additional pupil premium and physical education and sports funding, as well as the dates of policy reviews.

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 Cheshire East. 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 senior colleagues. I met members of the local advisory board and representatives of members and directors of the multi-academy trust. I discussed the curriculum with subject leaders. You and I visited classrooms to observe teaching and look at books. I discussed behaviour, attendance and safeguarding with you, the deputy headteacher and the chief executive officer. I met eight pupils chosen at random from Years 3 to 6 and spoke to pupils and staff as I walked around the school. I examined the 21 responses to the staff survey and the 46 responses to Parent View. I also spoke to 15 parents as they brought their children to school.