

21 June 2018

Mrs Linda Hoey  
Headteacher  
Allesley Primary School  
Antrim Close  
Allesley  
Coventry  
West Midlands  
CV5 9FY

Dear Mrs Hoey

### **Short inspection of Allesley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 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 March 2014.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

When you took up your post as headteacher in March 2016, you found that standards and practice varied across the school. You recognised that the school required fresh impetus and a unifying vision. The leadership team was reorganised, with the appointment of two assistant headteachers. Together, you set about establishing values centred on a respect for each pupil as an individual and maximising their educational opportunities. Inspection evidence showed me conclusively that you have succeeded. You have a clear vision for the school, which has a united body of staff, pupils, parents and carers. All the parents who spoke to me were impressed by the care and attention that their children receive. They recognise the good progress that pupils make. Pupils and parents said that although learning is always purposeful, it is very often fun.

The school is now improving rapidly. You have identified the comparative weaknesses in the school and tackled them with energy and skill. You have made good use of other local schools to demonstrate best practice to help improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, those issues identified as areas for improvement at the time of the previous inspection are no longer any cause for concern. Standards in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent), for example, are considerably higher than they were.

Leaders trust teachers to exercise their professional judgement to design tasks that interest pupils and allow them to gain the knowledge and understanding they require.

Teachers are repaying that trust. Staff adapt the work so that pupils of all abilities are able to deepen their understanding. They use the correct terminology for each subject, and from a young age expect pupils to do the same. Teachers check effectively on pupils' progress and intervene when pupils are in danger of falling behind. Teaching assistants work well with individuals and groups. They discuss the work with pupils to identify any misconceptions and consolidate their understanding. Pupils respond very well to the expectation that they should help each other to learn, and they collaborate very effectively.

Classrooms 'buzz' with pupils' enthusiastic discussion of their work. During my visit to a Year 4 class, pupils were using plastic blocks to explore fractions. When it became clear that one pupil had misunderstood the key concept, another pupil politely corrected him, explaining his point of view articulately. Pupils used the terms 'numerator', 'denominator' and 'equivalent fraction' with easy familiarity.

Pupils are fully involved in the life of the school. Because lessons are inherently interesting, they are totally immersed in their work. They told me, for example, how engaging homework often is. A high proportion take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills as house captains or school counsellors. Most importantly, they understand thoroughly how the school enables them to learn and develop their strong moral and social attitudes. Pupils' approach to their studies is excellent and during my visit their conduct around the school was exemplary.

Pupils' outcomes rose in 2017 and significantly so at key stage 2. Attainment was a little above the national average, and pupils left Year 6 having made progress across the key stage that was broadly average. The relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils achieved well. Inspection evidence shows that current pupils are making strong progress in English and particularly strong progress in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school has a strong culture of safeguarding, and all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff know pupils and their dispositions very well. They use that knowledge to identify any anxieties or problems and to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils, in turn, feel entirely safe in school and know that adults are always there to help them. Leaders work effectively with parents and other agencies to look after those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

Pupils told me that bullying is almost non-existent. They were able to recall, in detail, the advice that school staff and visitors had given them about how to stay safe online. Pupils also demonstrated that they know how to stay safe on the roads, and on educational visits.

The school's policies and procedures comply with the most recent legislation. Leaders keep accurate and detailed records, which are held securely online and available to those who need to use them. You update the staff regularly on safeguarding matters and on the needs of those pupils who are of concern.

## **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have improved radically the teaching of mathematics. Across the school, teachers ensure that pupils think hard about mathematical ideas. They commonly ask pupils to explain their reasoning, both verbally and in writing. As a result, pupils gain confidence in their own understanding, which enables them to apply what they have learned to practical situations and new contexts. Teachers frequently and skilfully incorporate the use of numeracy skills into lessons in other subjects, such as science, geography or technology. Teachers are adept at identifying when pupils need to consolidate their mathematical understanding, and when to move them on. Pupils receive detailed, prompt feedback on any misconceptions so that they are able to learn from their mistakes. Pupils of all abilities make good use of practical equipment in mathematics.
- In 2017, the proportions of Year 2 pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics were at or above those seen nationally. In writing and in mathematics, however, the proportion who attained at greater depth was below average. Leaders formally identified the need to ensure that more key stage 1 pupils attain at greater depth. Consequently, they provided staff with appropriate professional development to improve this aspect of teaching. This year, teachers ensure that pupils practise the specific skills they need to attain at the higher standard. The school's information shows that in 2018 a considerably higher proportion of pupils are on track to attain at greater depth in writing and mathematics.
- Governors exercise effective oversight of the school. They know the school well and understand its priorities. Individual governors bring specific skills to the governing body, for example in working with other agencies and in health and safety. They perform effective checks on leaders' management of safeguarding. Governors provided you with strong support in making the changes you sought when you took up your post. They told me that they now appreciate the honest and open conversation they are able to have with leaders about the school's progress. Records show that governors' meetings address a broad range of important topics but suggest that governors' challenge to senior leaders could sometimes be more sharply focused. Governors have ensured that the school site is well maintained, attractive and secure.
- You and other leaders are committed to providing a broad and stimulating curriculum. Subject leaders are knowledgeable about their subjects. In reading, writing and mathematics, teachers regularly assess pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders use this information to identify pupils at risk of falling behind. At the end of each year, teachers also assess and record, in some detail, pupils'

attainment in foundation subjects so that future work can be pitched at the right level.

- Teachers use the school's 'target trees' and the curriculum overview for each year group to plan sequences of lessons that engage pupils well, and which are often truly imaginative. Literacy and numeracy are successfully interwoven with key themes. For example, Year 6 pupils explained to me how their art and writing reflected their understanding of South America. A Year 2 project on chocolate bars combined artistic skills with literacy, numeracy and an understanding of food technology. However, pupils' books showed that some teaching does not focus enough on the knowledge, skills and understanding specified in the national curriculum for some foundation subjects and in the syllabus for religious education (RE). Standards in science are evidently high, both in the attention teachers pay to working scientifically and in the depth of knowledge that pupils display.
- Pupils' attendance has risen over recent years so that in the academic year 2016/17 it was above that seen nationally. This year, despite the school's popularity with pupils and their parents, attendance has fallen back somewhat. Although the rate remains in line with the recent average, leaders recognise that more needs to be done sooner to address the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make at least good progress in RE and all foundation subjects, and develop thorough subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding
- staff take prompt action when a pupil's attendance begins to slip and work with the family to ensure that their child's attendance returns to a regular pattern.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Spoor  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and governors. I held informal conversations with other members of staff. I spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority. I observed the teaching of mathematics and other subjects jointly with senior leaders. I met with a group of pupils to gather

their views, and spoke informally with many more, including the house captains. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I observed pupils' behaviour at social times and when they moved around the school.

I took account of the 88 recent responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and views from individual parents. I also considered 29 responses to the survey for staff, and 99 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

I scrutinised a wide range of documents, including the evaluation of the school's performance and plans for improvement; records of governors' meetings; policies; curriculum plans; and records of pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour. I looked in detail at records which show how the school keeps pupils safe.