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Mrs Deborah Steen  
Headteacher  
Salisbury Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Steen

### **Short inspection of Salisbury Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 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 January 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in December 2017, you have brought a renewed drive and vigour to improving opportunities for pupils. You, along with your leadership team, have created a calm and nurturing environment where pupils are able to thrive.

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to both the leadership and teaching team. Despite some substantial challenges, you have ensured that this has not had an impact on the quality of education that Salisbury Primary School provides. You and your senior team identified areas of the school that needed improving and tackled these issues with tenacity. As a result, all pupils including those who are disadvantaged, make very strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

You have created a clear and detailed improvement plan. Aply supported by your senior leaders, you carefully monitor the quality of teaching and learning and act quickly to address any areas identified for development. Pupils' performance is analysed robustly, and you swiftly identify where improvements are needed. You have particularly focused on increasing the level of challenge in lessons for all pupils, including the most able. Staff now give pupils more opportunities to think and work things out for themselves. Evidence of this was seen in key stage 1 mathematics books, where pupils were given a range of opportunities to explain their reasoning when solving calculations.

However, you and your team recognise that more needs to be done in this area to ensure that the level of challenge is consistent across all classes.

Governors know the school extremely well and support the drive to improve standards across the school. You and your governors have established positive relationships and work together very effectively. Governors take an active role in holding leaders at all levels to account and monitor the impact of school actions for themselves.

The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They commented that leaders and staff members are approachable and helpful and have time to listen to worries or concerns. Parents with whom I spoke were very positive about your leadership. Parents' views were summed up by a parent who stated, 'The school is all about the children.' You have identified the need to involve parents in supporting good attendance, so that some better understand that absence from school can hinder the progress that their children make.

Pupils are polite and respectful and behave well during lunch and breaktimes. They value the help and support given to them by their teachers and state that lessons are 'fun and exciting'. You ensure that pupils are actively involved in the life of the school by giving them the opportunity to undertake roles of responsibility such as 'class ambassadors' and 'play leaders'.

There is a high number of admissions to the school that occur outside of the standard admission round, with pupils joining and leaving the school at different times of the school year. This means that attainment and progress information can be subject to frequent change. However, performance information shows that pupils who join the school in Reception and remain with the school throughout their primary years attain well and make very good progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Leaders and governors take their safeguarding duties seriously and ensure that safeguarding requirements are fit for purpose.

Effective and well-trained designated safeguarding leaders have ensured that regular and purposeful training is provided for all staff and governors. Detailed and robust record-keeping is a strong feature of safeguarding practice. Members of the safeguarding team meet regularly to provide support to one another in critical cases. Leaders work well with external agencies and follow up concerns resolutely. Strong support is provided to those families experiencing difficulties. Leaders work tirelessly to break down barriers to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need.

Pupils all play an important role in the promotion of safeguarding across the school. They shared information about their role as 'A star sheriffs'. These pupils work with staff members to help their peers understand how to keep

themselves safe, including when online. Pupils are rightly proud of their work in this area and understand the importance of helping others to stay safe.

## **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I looked at the actions you have taken to ensure that pupils across key stage 1, especially boys, are provided with the appropriate level of support and challenge. You and your senior team have paid close attention to this area and have introduced a wide range of strategies to aid improvement. In lessons, teachers now have a much clearer understanding of what pupils know and can do. Work is matched well to the needs of pupils and teachers plan creative and exciting lessons to capture pupils' interests. Adults have a firm knowledge of the pupils they support and as a result, pupils are provided with highly effective help and guidance. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen and enthusiastic learners. The standard of work they produce is improving. However, questions asked by adults during lessons do not consistently challenge pupils to think deeply about their learning. Too many questions focus on what pupils already know.
- In key stage 1 the performance of boys has been variable. During the inspection, evidence was seen in pupils' books and in lesson observations that showed that there is now no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Careful monitoring of the performance of boys has identified potential weaknesses and any dips in performance have been addressed quickly.
- You have acted swiftly to address the shortcomings in the teaching of reading in key stage 1. Leaders have embedded a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Pupils can successfully decode an increasing range of vocabulary and pupils' reading books are well matched to their phonic ability. Staff recognise that pupils need more help when searching for clues in a text when making assertions about characters and plots. To this end, you have introduced a new approach to guided reading. Teaching focuses on the skills pupils need to have a better understanding of what they have read and supports pupils in making evidence-based predictions from a variety of texts. Year 2 readers, especially boys, are reading with increasing confidence and understanding.
- Within your school development plan, you have clearly identified the early years as an area for improvement. This is because outcomes over time have been inconsistent. You have accessed external advice to support improvement in this area and have closely monitored the quality of teaching and learning. Your actions have led to some improvements. Adult-led activities provide children with opportunities to practise their number, phonics and writing skills, all of which are now well embedded. However, the indoor learning environment is not being used to maximum effect. There are not enough purposeful activities to develop all aspects of the children's learning or capture their interest. Adults do not question children regularly enough to check their understanding or extend their thinking. As a result, learning opportunities are lost.
- Over recent years, too few pupils have attended school regularly. You have worked hard to improve this by working closely with families and external agencies and providing valuable support to overcome barriers to attendance. You

keep detailed records of pupils' attendance. Any pupil whose attendance drops below what is expected nationally is quickly identified and individual cases are followed through. Whole-school attendance is improving and is now average. Until recently the number of pupils who were persistently absent from school was above the national average. Due to the school's effective actions this is quickly decreasing, and for those pupils who have attended the school since the Reception Year it is below the national average. You do not shy away from taking robust action when attendance doesn't improve. Sanctions include fines and penalty notices.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they embed work further to increase the level of challenge for pupils across key stage 1, so that they all achieve the standards of which they are capable
- learning opportunities in the early years are more purposeful, so they capture children's interests and are sufficiently challenging to allow children to make improved progress.

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

Josie Leese  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss your self-evaluation and your plans for improvement. We also discussed the work of the school to safeguard pupils and support their attendance. Together, we visited a sample of classrooms, looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils about their learning. I spoke with the assistant headteacher to discuss current improvement strategies in reading and looked at examples of pupils' work in their books.

I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke to a representative from the local authority. I met with a group of five pupils, chosen at random from key stage 2, to discuss aspects of their learning, personal development, behaviour and welfare and I listened to several pupils read. I spoke informally with pupils in classrooms and around the school.

I looked at 15 responses from pupils to the Ofsted online survey. I spoke to several parents and examined the 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I took into account a further 21 responses from staff to the Ofsted online

questionnaire. I checked a sample of your records relating to safeguarding and to pupils' behaviour. I reviewed your records of checks on the suitability of staff, volunteers and governors to work with pupils.