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Mr Izhar Khan
Headteacher
Somerville Primary (NC) School
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Dear Mr Khan

Short inspection of Somerville Primary (NC) School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2017 with Stuart Evans, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Since you were appointed as headteacher, shortly after the previous inspection, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school. In a number of aspects, such as attendance, you have achieved rapid recent improvements. Outcomes in reading and mathematics have continued to improve significantly in key stages 1 and 2. You have maintained a high level of consistency in the quality of teaching.

Pupils behave impeccably and their attitudes to learning are a credit to the school. You have established a learning ethos throughout the school and are tackling with rigour issues where you have identified that further improvement is still needed.

Staff responding to the survey were universally positive about the school, as were the large majority of pupils and parents who either spoke to inspectors or completed surveys.

Good leadership has ensured that:

- you and other leaders have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and what needs to improve further

- pupils, having joined the school from exceptionally low starting points, go on to achieve above-average outcomes in reading and especially mathematics by the end of Year 6
- teachers consistently set high expectations for pupils to do well
- rates of absence and persistent absence, which were high last year, are falling rapidly
- pupils behave exceptionally well in school.

Inspectors praised the senior leaders at the last inspection for the relentless efforts to ensure that every child was cared for and able to achieve well. You have maintained these efforts and ensured that outcomes for pupils have continued to improve.

In the previous inspection report, inspectors stated that the school should enhance teaching to make all practice at least good by ensuring that all pupils were appropriately challenged and supported, particularly the most able pupils. A further recommendation was to enhance target-setting procedures for all pupils.

You have ensured that a large proportion of teaching over time is at least good. By the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils have made above expected progress in mathematics and broadly expected progress in reading. However, you acknowledge that there is further work to do to ensure that more of the most able pupils achieve well in writing and in reading at both key stages 1 and 2, including those who are disadvantaged. Pupils are set challenging and aspirational targets as teachers' expectations for them are high. Pupils spoken to knew what their targets for improvement were. The school has implemented termly target-setting days between pupils and teachers and these are then shared with parents through their planners.

This is not yet an outstanding school. In addition to further work to raise outcomes for the most able pupils, actions to impact on the current progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils, and evaluation of the impact of activities funded by the pupil premium, are underdeveloped.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of leaders promoting the safeguarding and well-being of pupils in the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are appropriate and meet statutory requirements. Records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders with the responsibility for safeguarding are well trained and ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and duties. Training, for example on the 'Prevent' duty, has been thorough.

Staff are effective in monitoring that staff understand their responsibilities and have read the latest guidance. Governors are aware of their role to ensure that the school meets its statutory duties. Themed weeks for pupils on health and safety and e-safety ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- You have ensured that by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, including those who are disadvantaged, they have made very rapid progress in mathematics and rapid progress in reading. They have exceeded expected standards in reading and especially in mathematics and achieved expected standards in writing.
- The environment of the school is calm and purposeful, with a strong focus on learning in each classroom. Little time is wasted as pupils are actively engaged in their work.
- Staff are highly committed to providing a language-rich environment to enable more pupils to access higher-order literacy skills. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making very rapid progress in mathematics. A small proportion of most-able pupils are now working in greater depth in writing. Their exceptionally low starting points and often a lack of literacy skills in their first language means pupils have further to travel to reach higher standards.
- Pupils are exposed to challenging work. For example, Year 6 were studying Auden's poem 'Stop the clocks', and Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. Most-able pupils are now gaining access to a wider range of reading including classical novels.
- Pupils now have the opportunity to write for a wider range of purposes, for example using inference in writing. They have also initiated a persuasive writing exercise, drafting letters to send to President Trump at the White House.
- Pupils experience the opportunity through the creative curriculum to study cross-curricular topics including the Anglo-Saxons, Egyptians and Romans. They have the chance to experience real-life events, for example through residential trips and a trip to the House of Commons.
- Teachers are tackling the slightly below-average standards pupils achieved last year in the English grammar spelling and punctuation test in Year 6 by increasing the teaching of basic literacy skills. There is a strong emphasis on spelling and grammar and speaking in full sentences in literacy lessons, backed up in other subjects through the creative curriculum.
- In mathematics, pupils are exposed to problem-solving and reasoning tasks. English language barriers do not prevent pupils, including most-able pupils and those who are disadvantaged, from achieving very well in this subject.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making above expected progress compared to other pupils nationally although outcomes are low because of their very low starting points. Rapid progress is achieved through effectively targeted support and high-quality teaching.
- Standards of behaviour in lessons and around school are very high. Pupils have a thirst for learning and want to do well. They show a high degree of respect for each other, including those from different cultural and faith backgrounds. Pupils spoken to were highly positive about the school, saying they enjoyed almost all of their lessons and felt very safe in school.

- Governors are highly committed and supportive of the school. They bring considerable experience, expertise and knowledge to their role and are well informed on the strengths and areas for development in the school.
- Attendance is rapidly improving from the high rates of absence and persistent absence during the most recent academic year. The school is successfully challenging the culture of term-time holidays and promoting good attendance through the work of dedicated learning mentors. Rewards such as a draw for the best attenders leading to a prize of a new bicycle are providing incentives for pupils to attend regularly. Information provided by the school for current attendance indicates that it is rapidly improving and the number of persistent absentees is falling significantly.
- The large majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or gave free text responses, were very positive. The overwhelming majority said their children were happy, safe, well looked after and were making good progress in school. About one in five of the parents who responded to Parent View or free text, however, disagreed that the school responds well to their concerns but this was not supported by the very large majority of other parents.
- Pupils spoken to and parents were enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs available including breakfast club, eco club, sports clubs and the school council. For the most able pupils, additional opportunities have been provided through debating clubs, science challenges, music tuition and additional support in writing.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have made less than expected progress in writing and none were working at greater depth in the 2016 assessments at the end of key stage 2. The most able pupils currently in school are not making as much rapid progress in reading and writing in key stages 1 and 2 as they are in mathematics.
- There is limited analysis on the progress being made currently by disadvantaged pupils, especially those who are high-attaining. The evaluation of the pupil premium does not detail in enough depth the impact of different activities it funds.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the English curriculum, physical education and sport premium funding, special educational needs or behaviour on its website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making more rapid progress in reading and writing across key stages 1 and 2
- there is greater analysis and evaluation of the impact of different activities funded by the pupil premium on the progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils

- the school meets all its requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors met you, other senior members of staff and six members of the local governing body including the chair. Inspectors also met parents and spoke by telephone to a member of the Birmingham Education Partnership, which provides external support for the school. Inspectors visited parts of nine lessons, observed jointly with you or other senior leaders. They also observed pupils as they moved around the school. Inspectors met with two groups of pupils. There were 56 responses to Parent View and 55 responses to Parent View free text. Inspectors also took account of 53 pupil survey responses and 32 staff survey responses.

Inspectors considered pupil outcomes in writing, English, grammar, punctuation and spelling, outcomes for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, the impact of the pupil premium funding, provision for special educational needs, how effective the arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are and how well attendance is managed.