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Jenny Pritchard  
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Dear Mrs Pritchard

### **Short inspection of Muxton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 July 2017, 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 2013.

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

Since your appointment as headteacher in January 2015, you have maintained the good quality of education in the school seen at the last inspection. Together with your leadership team and governors, you have a clear overview of where strengths and areas for improvement lie. Your self-evaluation and appraisal of school improvement is honest and accurate. Actions taken have led to improvements in teaching and outcomes for pupils. Provisional assessment information for 2017, which shows that attainment at the end of Year 6 is well above average, is testament to the initiatives and systems you have put in place.

You provide a caring and nurturing environment in which pupils can thrive. Pupils are polite, mature and highly responsible. They work hard and are keen to succeed. You ensure that pupils' voices are well represented in the school, for example through pupils' participation in the Muxton Safeguarding Voice (MSV). Pupils enjoy school and describe their teachers as 'wonderful' and 'inspirational'. They benefit from a wide range of curricular opportunities and there is good evidence in their books and on display of the broad range of work they cover.

You have successfully addressed the key issues raised at the previous inspection. Teachers provide pupils with demanding work which challenges and probes their thinking. High levels of engagement were noted during our classroom visits from all pupils. Problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics are particularly well developed. As a result, a large proportion of pupils demonstrate that they are

working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Effective teaching has also ensured that attainment in English and mathematics has remained above the national average at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 since the previous inspection.

There remains work to be done in accelerating the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. While these pupils make good progress from their starting points, differences remain between their attainment and that of their peers and other pupils nationally in all year groups, except Year 6. Progress rates are also variable and, as a result, too few reach the higher levels at the end of Year 2, especially in writing. Additionally, a minority of parents expressed concerns during the inspection about communication, approachability and provision for pupils with individual needs. You and your governors are keen to work with these parents and address any concerns they have.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The safeguarding culture within the school is strong. As one of the school's three designated safeguarding leaders, you ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust. All staff are fully trained and conversant with the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education. You make swift referrals to outside agencies where worries are raised and access external professional support and advice. Records of actions and concern are completed efficiently and stored securely. You diligently carry out checks on staff prior to appointment to make sure they are suitable and safe to work with children. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This is because they are taught well and encouraged to take an active part in promoting safety and well-being. The MSV plays a key role in preventing bullying within the school and encouraging pupils to report any problems. MSV comprises eight carefully chosen pupils from Years 5 and 6. They meet fortnightly with an agenda, to discuss pertinent issues. They lead assemblies and wear red hoodies with their names and the MSV title to make them easily identifiable. They deal with any potential issues, such as homophobic bullying and cyber bullying. They carry out their duties responsibly and effectively. This contributes to pupils feeling safe at school. All pupils spoken to say they feel safe and almost all parents agree.

### **Inspection findings**

- Through effective recruitment procedures and positive leadership, you have created a united staff team, as shown in the Ofsted staff questionnaire returns. 100% of responses from staff said they were proud to work at Muxton.
- Together with governors and your deputy headteacher, you have devised an effective system to track pupils' achievement and ensure that provision is well matched to individual needs. All members of the leadership team carry out regular checks on teaching and provide good-quality support for colleagues in

terms of training and mentoring. This has had notable success and has ensured that teaching has remained good across the school. The local authority recognises areas of strength within the school, for example in the early years, and signposts other schools to visit this key stage to observe good practice.

- Governance is strong. Governors use their wide range of professional skills ably to support and challenge leaders. They gather first-hand evidence by visiting school to talk to pupils, look at books and meet with leaders to determine how well the school is doing. Governors have a detailed and precise understanding of assessment information as this is presented regularly in an agreed format. They are able to pinpoint precisely how well different groups of pupils are achieving.
- The sophisticated and well-developed assessment system, together with teacher information, helps leaders identify pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and target additional funding well. Provision is well matched to pupils' individual needs. For example, one-to-one support is provided for pupils with complex medical needs or physical disabilities, and additional support is in place for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Teachers plan work appropriate to pupils' abilities and regularly check their progress in lessons and track the impact of intervention programmes delivered. However, occasionally, too much adult support is provided. Some books checked show that pupils appear to have grasped a concept, when in test situations or through questioning, pupils are unsure, for example in telling the time. This means that the concept is not embedded and pupils do not fully understand some aspects.
- The pupil premium is used effectively. It funds additional staffing, such as an inclusion manager, software and resources, and external support and advice, for example from an educational psychologist. It is targeted at improving disadvantaged pupils' achievement. Support staff work with eligible pupils at the before-school 'early birds' club and 'wise owl' after-school homework club. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, differences remain in the attainment of these pupils and their peers in almost all year groups. Published results in 2016 and provisional results for 2017, show that the proportion of pupils reaching the required level, at the end of Year 2, was below the national average and no pupils reached the higher level in writing. School's own information also shows that differences remain in most current year groups. This is because some support staff do not allow pupils to be independent enough in lessons. They intervene too quickly and show pupils how to get the correct answers. As a result, pupils do not learn from their mistakes.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. Overall, attendance is above average and very few pupils are persistently absent. This is because pupils enjoy school and you take swift action to follow up any concerns. Where published data shows that some disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have low attendance, your analysis of these pupils and school records show that these absences are for legitimate reasons. For example, some pupils have significant medical conditions which require treatment in school time. Small numbers of pupils also have an adverse effect on the data. Good tracking procedures are in place and you employ an education welfare officer to follow up any cases of repeated absence.

- Parents' views of the school are mixed. Some parents spoken to, and approximately a third of those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, would not recommend the school to other parents. Their concerns included lack of communication, a sense that leaders and staff were not approachable and that some of their concerns, especially relating to their children's individual needs, go unheard. However, only approximately a sixth of parents responded to the questionnaire so it is not a conclusive picture. Indeed, your own survey, carried out at parents' evening in the spring term this year, presents a more positive view and represents at least three quarters of parents at the school. Positive comments made by parents through their text messages include:

'I cannot thank the staff enough for their hard work and efforts to give pupils a happy and safe environment and experience through their time at school, and continue to praise them for going above and beyond their job role for the pupils.'

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching accelerates the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities across the school, especially in writing in key stage 1, so that more pupils reach and exceed the levels expected nationally
- communication and relationships with those parents who have concerns is strengthened.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and members of your leadership team, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I discussed the work of the school with you, including the processes and procedures in place for safeguarding. I visited a selection of classrooms from Years 2 to 6, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I listened to pupils read their work and talked to pupils at breaktime to gather their views about the school. I also met with the pupils' safeguarding team (MSV).

I looked at a range of school documents, including the school's information about pupils' achievement and attendance. I also reviewed the school's own evaluation of

its work, together with the school development plan and one of your reports to governors. I took account of the 68 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The school's own survey of parents' views was also considered and additional information collected from parents at the end of the school day. There were no responses to the online pupil survey but 14 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered.