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Mrs Rachel Hughes
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hughes

Short inspection of Perdiswell Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This has been a challenge because the standard of education slipped dramatically between June 2014 and September 2016. On taking up your post in September 2016, you swiftly diagnosed the reasons and began to take effective action. As a result, the decline has been halted. The quality of teaching has improved notably. Standards are recovering quickly.

You have transformed the culture of the school into one in which staff strive to do their best for the benefit of pupils. You are determined, methodical and rigorous in your approach to improving the school. You have built around you a team of effective senior and middle leaders who share your vision. You and these senior staff drive relentlessly to turn the vision into reality. Your actions are working. The school has improved rapidly and is getting better all the time.

Staff are very supportive of your ambitions. They embrace the opportunity to improve and value the training provided. Teachers feel trusted to take risks and try out new ways of working. As a result, staff take complete responsibility for their professional development and for the quality of their teaching. This is why it has improved.

After the previous inspection, governors did not challenge leaders well enough. They were too quick to accept assurances that all was well. Consequently, they were unaware of the extent of the decline until you presented your accurate evaluation of the school's performance. Since then, governors have worked

effectively with you to ensure that they are fully informed about what is working well and what is not. Governors are now much more confident to carry out their role and have a clear strategic oversight of the school's work. Governors are not afraid to challenge you, nor do they hesitate in taking decisive action, if needed, to maintain the rapid rate of improvement.

You actively seek relevant external support to help you address your well-chosen priorities. Similarly, you readily act on advice. For example, you have involved your staff in a range of appropriate projects and networks. These have helped subject leaders to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics, reading and science. Similar work is planned for next term to improve the quality of pupils' writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

When you arrived, you found significant weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements. You quickly put this right and ensured that procedures are fit for purpose. Pupils' safety and well-being are of now of uppermost priority. As a result, the school is a happy place where pupils thrive.

All staff now know what to do if they are concerned for a pupil's welfare. Concerns are taken very seriously. Information is stored and communicated appropriately. Leaders work tenaciously and in strong partnership with outside agencies, such as social services and the police force, to endeavour to ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need.

Inspection findings

- A strong and effective leadership team now understands precisely the school's strengths. Leaders at all levels, including governors, tackle weaknesses systematically and thoroughly. Leaders implement well-considered actions in a measured way, with a strong focus on impact. As a result, the school has recovered from its recent decline, and the improvements are sustainable.
- You have prioritised actions appropriately, focusing on what will build the foundations for lasting impact. For example, you chose to address fundamental weaknesses in the teaching of reading before tackling the teaching of writing. Pupils now decode words efficiently from an early age because phonics is taught well. They learn to understand good-quality texts because teachers explicitly teach the necessary skills. As a result, pupils are learning how language works. This is a prerequisite of being able to write effectively.
- Similarly, the effective approach to implementing the new mathematics curriculum has boosted teachers' confidence and skills in teaching the more demanding content of the 2014 national curriculum. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. They think critically and creatively when solving problems.
- Plans are in place to extend the focus next year to include the teaching of writing. Teachers are well placed to make the necessary changes to their practice because they have successfully improved the quality of their teaching in reading and mathematics.

- After their underachievement in recent years, most pupils are now working at least in line with the expected standards for their ages. Many of the most able pupils are working at appropriately high standards. This is a notable improvement. For many pupils, this shows that they are achieving well, given their starting points and abilities.
- For some middle-attaining pupils, their prior attainment was lower than it should have been, given their abilities. While these pupils are now making acceptable progress, some still need to catch up if they are to attain the higher standards of which they are capable.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the planned actions to improve the quality of pupils' writing match the success of previous work in reading and mathematics
- middle prior-attainers who are capable of reaching the highest standards in their work do so consistently.

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

Yours sincerely

Sandra Hayes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, other school staff and a group of governors, including the chair. I spoke with a representative of the local authority. I spoke informally to pupils in lessons and at lunchtime. I looked at the 65 responses to the Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, 27 responses to the staff questionnaire and 85 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I visited lessons with the headteacher and other senior staff, looked at the work in a selection of pupils' books and heard some pupils read. I considered the school's self-evaluation and its plans for development. I took into account pupils' standards of attainment and rates of progress. I read a range of documents, including those related to safeguarding and child protection.