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Mrs Alison Lowe  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Lowe

### **Short inspection of Even Swindon Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 2018 with Andrew Brown, 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 November 2014.

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

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

You work effectively with other leaders to promote a vibrant and highly valued community school. You are uncompromising and place pupils at the heart of your decision making. Together with other leaders, including governors, you are continuing to improve the school. You understand the changing context and growth of the school and have ensured that the school takes the right steps to meet pupils' needs. For example, your strategic decisions to develop the provision and support for pupils who speak English as an additional language are enabling them to do well. In addition, pupils in the specialist resource provision (SRP) who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported effectively through well-directed support and an inclusive culture to ensure that they succeed.

Your self-evaluation of the school's work is robust and accurate. You rigorously check the quality of teaching, ensuring that pupils' progress is the key determinant in driving improvements. You and other leaders hold teachers to account consistently well. You identify where teachers need support to improve and thereby have ensured good teaching across the school. Furthermore, through regularly providing high-quality training and professional development, you have successfully nurtured leadership talent to form an effective leadership team. For example, the phonics leader's expertise is recognised by the local authority and her strong practice is being used successfully to lead training for other schools. Leaders work

effectively together with a shared enthusiasm and commitment which are reflected by teachers and pupils.

Pupils and parents and carers are proud of the school. In fact, 91% of parents would recommend it. For example, in response to Parent View, a parent says, 'The school is superb,' and, 'I believe that Even Swindon is an excellent school that fully meets my child's needs.' Pupils make valuable contributions in lessons and around the school. However, pupils' attendance is below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. In addition, the percentage of pupils with persistently high absence is almost twice the national average. You recognise this and are working with a range of personnel to tackle this to improve attendance and ensure that pupils get the most from their education.

Since the previous inspection, you have worked diligently to address the identified areas for improvement. In particular, you have tackled weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics so that pupils' outcomes have improved well. You have also improved processes and systems for tracking pupils' progress to ensure that teachers use assessment information productively. Teachers are regularly matching work closely to pupils' needs. However, you recognise that there is more to do to ensure that pupils build on the good start they make in early years. We agreed that, although children make strong progress from low starting points, it is imperative that children maintain their progress so that a greater proportion reach national benchmarks by the end of their Reception Year (to achieve a 'good level of development') and in meeting age-appropriate standards in their phonic knowledge in order for them to be well set for the next stage in their education.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. As a result, staff are well trained and diligent. They know what to do to keep them safe. You lead by example as the school's designated safeguarding lead. Together with other staff, you work well with parents, families and external agencies to provide effective and personalised support. You also take timely action to intervene for pupils, either referring or seeking other professional advice when the need arises, including the police or social services.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They have confidence that staff will look after them. Pupils talk articulately about the role of Year 5/6 anti-bullying monitors and have gained a good understanding of bullying, for example through assemblies. They also know how to stay safe online. Pupils recognise the importance of staying safe and their role in this. They play and learn well together to make Even Swindon Primary a welcoming, secure and inclusive environment. This is reflected in how pupils in the SRP are well supported, often with successful and full reintegration into the rest of the school.

## Inspection findings

- We agreed the key lines of enquiry for the inspection.
- We looked closely at the early development of communication, literacy and language as well as children's reading in early years. Many children enter as two-, three- or four-year-olds below the stages of development typical for their age. The early years provision is skilfully led and managed to ensure that children benefit from an environment rich in language and literacy. Teaching makes effective use of resources, activities and displays to interest children. From the start, children are engaging in songs, nursery rhymes and listening to stories to develop their understanding of patterns and sound to develop their speaking and communication. As a result, children catch up well and make strong progress towards meeting age-appropriate expectations in speaking and listening skills by the time they leave Reception.
- Teachers in early years also plan provision with activities that 'thread' writing and reading through sessions or across the day. For example, in Nursery, children in the kitchen role-play area have been writing shopping lists and a 'first cook book' is provided to invite children to handle books and explore non-fiction. Children are inspired and show an interest in reading and writing. For instance, Nursery children have published their own books based on a story they have told in class.
- Teachers in early years know the children well. They plan work that is well matched to the children's needs. This helps the majority of children to make strong progress. However, some lower achieving boys are not being targeted swiftly enough to help them catch up fully in their reading. You recognise this and understand the priority to ensure that all children are well prepared for key stage 1.
- We also focused on pupils' acquisition of phonic knowledge and skills to ensure that they are able to read with increasing confidence, fluency and enjoyment in early years and key stage 1. The phonics curriculum is led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic expert. Together with other leaders, she checks the quality of teaching and learning closely. High expectations of the pupils and a robust strategy featuring an effective daily programme enable pupils to start catching up well.
- A strong feature of your approach ensures that pupils are able to use and apply their phonic knowledge independently in a range of contexts for reading and writing. As a result, pupils enjoy experimenting with letters and sounds. They learn how to decode to read quickly but also start acquiring a wide knowledge of vocabulary to enhance their reading and writing.
- Teachers know pupils well and plan work that is matched closely to their needs. As a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points. However, we agreed that in some phonics lessons, the most able pupils are not challenged or moved on swiftly enough. For example, they spend time recapping knowledge that they already know. This slows their learning and detracts from the otherwise strong progress that they are making over time.
- Finally, we examined how effectively pupils are being prepared to read well for a secondary education and whether key stage 2 reading outcomes that improved in

2017 are being sustained. You and your team had already made reading a priority in the school improvement plan. As a result of your well-considered and effective actions, pupils are now reading for a variety of reasons and with increasing fluency and command. There is a strong culture for reading; for example, pupils enjoy 'dropping everything to read', playing 'reading bingo' and celebrating reading in achievement assemblies with parents. This is continuing to promote an enjoyment of reading and accelerating pupils' progress, including for the most able pupils.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- children reach the national benchmarks for a good level of development at the end of Reception, particularly through raising the achievement of boys in reading
- the most able pupils are fully stretched and challenged in acquiring phonics knowledge and understanding to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I agreed the timetable and related activities at the start of the inspection with you. Inspectors worked extensively with you and other leaders to review the quality of pupils' work, hearing them read and checking what they know in lessons. Inspectors scrutinised safeguarding records and we discussed a wide range of matters related to safeguarding, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I reviewed evidence to show how you work and liaise with multi-agency partners to keep children safe. I also met with representatives of the governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and samples of governors' visits. I took full account of the 46 responses on Parent View as well as other surveys, including free-text responses received for the inspection. An inspector also met with parents. Additionally, there were 33 staff and 107 pupil survey responses taken into account as part of the inspection.