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Mrs Jan Cousins  
Headteacher  
Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School  
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Telford  
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Dear Mrs Cousins

### **Short inspection of Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 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 February 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Sir Alexander Fleming Primary is a highly effective school. It provides an inclusive and caring environment where all children are valued and experience success. Children are nurtured from the time they join the school in Nursery until the end of Year 6. From mainly low starting points, pupils go on to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above the national average. This is because the school works successfully to overcome potential barriers to achievement at school. Disadvantaged pupils and those who join the school partway through their education, for example, receive excellent support and do well.

Under your experienced and effective leadership, staff are supported to continually develop their skills. In turn, teachers value the comprehensive support they receive. They frequently discuss what the most effective teaching looks like and observe each other teach. Teachers from other schools often come to observe the strong practice in your school. There is a culture of learning together for everybody, not just the pupils.

The previous inspection recommended that you improve pupils' punctuality and the level of challenge in some classes. Since then, pupils' attendance and attitudes to school have improved, as has the level of challenge provided by teaching. You know that further improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills will raise standards in writing even higher, especially for the more able pupils.

You will be retiring at the end of the spring term 2018 but you have ensured that strong leadership is in place to provide stability and continual school improvement. Through strategic planning and development of staff, you have prepared leaders very well for their roles. All members of the leadership team work well together. They share your ambition and focus on doing the best for all pupils.

Parents and carers have confidence in the school's work. Pupils enjoy lessons and behave well.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that all staff are vigilant and respond quickly to any safeguarding concerns. Staff know the pupils and their families well. They provide support for a range of issues and ensure that the needs of the whole child are met. Pupils feel safe in school and say that there is no bullying. They know who to turn to if they have a problem.

Staff work closely with the police and other agencies to minimise the risks pupils might face in their lives. They are well aware of local concerns such as child sexual exploitation and are alert to the signs of grooming. They teach pupils sensitively, taking care not to cause anxiety, about how to stay safe online.

### **Inspection findings**

- When children join the school, many have skills that are underdeveloped for their age. During the early years they are well supported and quickly gain the skills they need to access the curriculum at Year 1. Teachers and other adults do all they can to enable children to thrive and succeed. Staff plan exciting activities that ensure that children are able to develop personal skills such as maintaining focus and concentration. As a result, children make excellent progress from their starting points. Work in children's books demonstrates strong progress, particularly in writing for disadvantaged boys. Outdoor learning in the forest school provides excellent stimulus for boys' writing and they respond positively to this.
- As a result of the strong progress in the early years, children cope well with the transition to Year 1 and make considerable gains in key stage 1. Consequently, outcomes at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national averages by the end of Year 2 in 2017.
- This strong progress continues across key stage 2. By the end of Year 6 in 2017, the proportion of pupils who achieved at the expected standard was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved at the higher standard was broadly in line with national figures. Clearly, pupils are doing very well, but you are committed to ensuring that they do

even better so that all achieve to the very best of their ability. You have identified that improving the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar skills will support pupils to achieve this.

- You and your staff strive to eliminate any barriers to pupils' learning, whatever these may be. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is considerably higher than the national average. Governors are rigorous in checking on the impact of this additional funding on pupils' achievement. As a result, your provision for disadvantaged pupils is highly effective and they achieve exceptionally well. For example, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2017 was above the national average. Progress for disadvantaged pupils in both reading and mathematics was also above the national average.
- High-quality teaching, learning and assessment are evident across the school. There is a culture of professional dialogue and debate where challenge is welcomed and staff feel well supported. The school's link with the Severn Teaching School Alliance provides many worthwhile opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills further and for trainee teachers to learn from practice in your school.
- Teachers plan exciting lessons that are very well matched to pupils' prior learning. Staff have high expectations. All pupils are challenged to produce their best work and they respond enthusiastically. Teaching assistants support pupils very effectively and are well deployed in lessons. As a result, all pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Staff at all levels are sensitive to the wide range of pupils' needs. They support pupils effectively to develop the resilience they need to cope with challenges in life and to become enthusiastic and resilient learners. As one parent said, 'The staff at all levels should be mightily proud of themselves.'
- The school is a vibrant learning environment, decorated with inspirational murals. These include cultural icons such as London buses and Beefeaters as well as famous fictional characters like Harry Potter. The headteacher's portrait has been added recently too. The outdoor space is equally inspiring, with a fort outdoor play area, an eco-garden and an outdoor classroom. This exciting environment reflects the culture and ethos where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the promotion of British values are at the heart of the school's work.
- Pupils behave well and bullying is rare. Pupils carry out a range of jobs, such as playground pals and librarians, which help them to develop their skills and become more caring and respectful of each other. Many pupils join and leave the school during the school year. In some cases, pupils leave and rejoin the school more than once. Despite this, staff at all levels ensure that pupils get the best possible opportunity to succeed and thrive in the school.
- Governors have a very well-informed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have a wide range of relevant skills and expertise to carry out their roles. They are knowledgeable about national developments and research. They receive regular reports from leaders about the current progress and attainment of pupils and about safeguarding. They ask challenging questions and visit the school regularly to find out for themselves what is happening.

- A breakfast club operates each day and provides an incentive to those pupils who need encouragement to come to school on time. Since the previous inspection, lateness has reduced and attendance has improved to be in line with the national average. In addition, the school has reduced the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Parents are extremely generous in their praise of the school. The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school to others. Parents say that their children love school and talk excitedly about their learning. Parents are kept well informed about the progress their children are making. 'My child has progressed so well here. I simply couldn't ask for better' was a typical parental comment reflecting the views of many.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that there is a continued:

- commitment to high-quality professional learning and development opportunities for all staff so that teaching and standards remain strong during the imminent change in leadership
- focus on improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills further to raise standards in writing even higher, and especially for the more able pupils.

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

Jane Spilsbury  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and the deputy headteacher at the beginning of the day. We discussed your school evaluation document and the school development plan. We agreed the key lines of enquiry and activities for the inspection, which were informed by my pre-inspection analysis and our discussions.

I visited lessons with the deputy headteacher and looked at pupils' books in classrooms. I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, along with one other governor. I also met with the school improvement adviser.

I reviewed the school's single central record and met with the designated safeguarding lead. I talked to pupils in lessons and in the playground about school life and safety matters.

I reviewed a number of school documents, including curriculum plans, assessment information, attendance and exclusion figures.

I spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I also took account of 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 16 free-text responses. I took account of 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 75 responses to the pupil survey.