

12 March 2019

Mrs Laura Slinn  
Head of School  
Two Rivers Primary School  
Quince  
Tamworth  
Staffordshire  
B77 4EN

Dear Mrs Slinn

### **Short inspection of Two Rivers Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2019 with Chris Pollitt, 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 outstanding in January 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment, just over two years ago, you have developed an effective working relationship with the executive headteacher, who now works across the two schools in the federation on a part-time basis. Two Rivers Primary is in the final stages of converting to an academy. The well-organised strategic leadership of the school, with a focused programme of monitoring and oversight, has ensured that you have maintained the momentum of improvement while these changes are taking place.

You and the staff put pupils' well-being at the heart of your work. From the moment pupils arrive into school, they are warmly welcomed and supported by staff. Strong relationships are clear to see. Parents and carers are full of praise for the work of the school, and the support their children receive. They say that staff know their children as individuals, which enables them to meet their needs well. Parents are particularly appreciative of the wider support your staff give to them and their families, through parent workshops, and individualised support and guidance. 'Fantastic school, amazing support', were phrases repeatedly expressed by parents. Equally, all staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey said that they were proud to be a member of the school.

You and other leaders are well supported and challenged by a skilful governing body. They bring an energy and enthusiasm to their roles and are focused on ensuring that the school is the best it can be for every single pupil. They visit the

school regularly to see for themselves the work that is taking place. They acknowledge that there is limited external scrutiny of the school beyond this, and that they are currently reliant on information from leaders.

You have ensured that the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed fully. The school is 'communication rich', and pupils and staff use signing confidently throughout the school day to communicate. Symbols are clearly displayed around the school building and are used to improve pupils' access to written materials such as timetables and learning objectives.

You and other leaders have further developed and refined your assessment systems. You use the information obtained through these systems well to identify where there are any gaps in learning and then address them well. For example, you saw that pupils were not making as much progress in mathematics last year as you expected, so you provided additional training for staff and introduced additional resources to engage pupils in mathematics activities. As a result, outcomes for pupils in mathematics have improved considerably this year. Pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about how they 'love maths!'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is given a high priority in your school. Since the last inspection, you have strengthened staff and governor training in all safeguarding matters. You have introduced a new system to record and monitor concerns as the previous recording system lacked detail. This ensures that any concerns are followed up quickly to ensure pupils' safety. Staff are confident in how to identify and report any concerns they have about a child. You and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) meet frequently to review any pupils for whom you have ongoing concerns. You ensure that pupils are given the right support, which may include help from other external agencies such as the child and adolescent mental health service.

The link safeguarding governor visits every term to carry out additional checks on all safeguarding matters, such as recruitment checks, training and a review of the safeguarding action plan. She provides a termly report to the governing body which keeps them fully informed of all aspects of safeguarding practice in the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders use additional funding effectively to enable pupils to access a wide range of therapies at Two Rivers Primary School. Leaders articulate a clear rationale for the use of therapies as they understand that pupils' well-being has an impact on their level of engagement in learning activities. In consultation with class staff, therapies are carefully chosen for individual pupils so that they have the most impact on their well-being, behaviour and resulting outcomes. Pupils enjoy therapies such as play, construction, rebound and music. The school's recently-established petting farm, along with the 'pets as therapy' dog, help to focus pupils' attention on caring for others, and reduce their anxieties. Close monitoring of these therapies, using the Leuven scale of emotional well-being and

involvement, and therapist reports, enable leaders and governors to see which therapies are having the most impact for pupils.

- The use of therapies is having a positive impact on pupils' well-being, and, consequently, their behaviour. Inspectors saw pupils behave well throughout the school day, in lessons, playtimes and as they moved around the school building. When needed, staff give additional support to pupils to help them manage their behaviour in a sensitive and discreet way. The school's records of behaviour incidents show that they are reducing over time, and the frequency of use of physical interventions is very low.
- The use of the physical education (PE) and sports premium funding for primary schools has further enhanced pupils' physical development. Staff have received additional training to improve their teaching of PE. Leaders' monitoring of lessons has shown that this has had a positive impact on the quality of PE lessons, and subsequent development of pupils' physical skills. Pupils are now having more opportunities to participate in competitive sports and go swimming more often. The impact of the use of additional funding is evaluated well by leaders and governors.
- Some pupils are supported to communicate through alternative means such as communication books where they use and exchange pictures to make their needs known. However, pupils are not helped to use these books throughout the school day, during lunchtimes and playtimes, for example. This limits pupils' opportunities to communicate both spontaneously and independently.
- Pupils enjoy the additional opportunities they are given to express their opinions about the school, through groups such as the school council, eco council, and as digital leaders. They told inspectors that they enjoy their responsibilities and clearly take them seriously.
- Leaders have further refined their approaches to the teaching of reading. They have introduced a bespoke, research-based scheme for pupils with Down syndrome to help pupils develop their reading skills. The recently introduced '20/20' daily phonics, spelling and mathematics focus is also contributing to improved progress for pupils in these areas. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed these sessions.
- Leaders' most recent analysis of information showed that pupils' progress in literacy recently took a dip. Leaders have identified gaps in pupils' development of vocabulary and have introduced a rolling programme to extend pupils' vocabulary in all curriculum subjects. Leaders have also enhanced the delivery of the literacy curriculum using stimuli such as Shakespeare, and visits to the Lichfield Garrick Theatre to perform on stage. Recent analysis shows that these actions are making a positive difference to pupils' outcomes.
- Work in pupils' literacy books shows that pupils are making progress, and the school's assessment information also shows this to be the case. However, on occasions, work for the most able pupils is not as challenging as it could be. Leaders are currently setting pupils' targets using the Department for Education's progression guidance. However, this information is based on the previous, rather than the current, national curriculum and as a result targets may not be

challenging enough.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' targets are suitably challenging so that pupils make the best progress they can
- pupils are able to use their communication systems consistently, throughout the school day
- they facilitate external scrutiny of all aspects of the school's performance.

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

Yours sincerely

Deb Jenkins  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We met with you, the executive headteacher and other members of the leadership team to discuss the work of the school. The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. She met with the DSL and you, in the capacity of deputy DSL, and spoke to the safeguarding governor on the phone. The lead inspector spoke to an external consultant who has provided leadership coaching support to the school.

We visited classes in the primary school, as well as the off-site early years class situated at the federation's high school. We looked at pupils' work in books and talked to pupils in lessons and at play and lunchtime. An inspector met with pupils from the school council.

We focused on several lines of enquiry during our visit. These included the use of additional funding and the impact of a range of therapies, how well pupils' communication, language and literacy are being developed, the use of assessment systems and safeguarding.

We looked at a range of school documents including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information, safeguarding records and minutes of meetings of the governing body. We looked at the school's website and the school's procedures and records of staff recruitment.