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Andrew Best  
Executive Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Best

### **Short inspection of Pinvin CofE First School**

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 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 March 2012.

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

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

Since becoming the executive headteacher in September 2014, you have ensured that Pinvin CofE First School works in close collaboration with its federation partner school, St Nicholas' Middle School. This partnership has had a positive effect on improving teaching and raising outcomes for pupils. The strength of the partnership is in the sharing of staff expertise, better continuity and transition for pupils, and stronger, more distributed leadership. This has added to the capacity for further improvement within the school.

You have created a highly inclusive culture where all pupils are welcome and encouraged to achieve as well as they can. The schools' motto of 'Together, we inspire, discover and achieve' sets the tone for the aspirational ethos within the school. Good-quality teaching enables all pupils to achieve well. The school has developed good relationships with parents, including those from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community. Parents spoken to are particularly positive about the support their children receive if they have additional needs. As one parent put it: 'Inclusive practices at the school are excellent; there is a distinct ethos of enabling every child to reach their full potential.'

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. You have successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement. Teaching is consistently good and

this has led to attainment at the end of key stage 1 being above national average over time. Boys' writing has also improved, due to the effective targeted teaching and support provided. Boys now attain at least in line with girls and standards at the end of Year 2 for boys are above the national average.

While leaders make good use of the funding received to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, further work is needed to raise the achievement of these groups across the school, including in the early years. Some pupils also need to develop their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills, in order to improve the quality of their writing, and use reasoning and problem-solving skills in their mathematics. These skills are not yet fully embedded or used effectively in different year groups. This limits the number of pupils who can demonstrate they are working at greater depth in writing and mathematics. Attendance is below average and too many pupils, particularly girls, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are persistently absent. This needs addressing, as this is a significant barrier to their learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Safeguarding is a shared role across the federation because it is deemed to be everyone's responsibility. Designated safeguarding leaders are fully trained and carry out their roles diligently and to a high standard. They have ensured that staff and governors have received the latest safeguarding guidance, are fully trained, and know precisely what to do if they have any concerns about pupils. Robust checks are carried out prior to appointing staff to confirm they are safe to work with children. Referrals are made to external services where there are significant concerns about a child's safety or well-being. Leaders are persistent when making these referrals to ensure that their concerns are addressed. Clear logs and records are kept and stored securely.

Pupils feel safe at school and their parents agree. This is because pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour policy in place and say that most pupils abide by this. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through different curriculum activities. Regular visitors emphasise the importance of personal safety, for example the police, fire and ambulance services, together with assemblies and lessons about anti-bullying and e-safety. Pupils know about the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber bullying, and the importance of reporting any problems to an adult.

### **Inspection findings**

- As the executive headteacher, you have worked tirelessly with the governing body to build a strong leadership team, improve teaching and raise achievement. You have managed staffing changes well since your appointment in order to minimise disruption to pupils' learning. You have also addressed weaknesses in teaching and improved the quality of teaching across the school. You have

successfully balanced your leadership of the two schools within the federation. Your evaluations of the school's strengths and areas for improvement are honest and accurate. You have a clear vision for further improvement.

- You are ably supported by an effective leadership team. Together you carry out regular checks on the quality of teaching and provide training and support for staff to carry out their roles efficiently. Greater use is made of staff expertise following the federation agreement, and some leaders oversee subject areas across both schools, for example English and mathematics. This aids consistency of practice and supports smoother transition arrangements for pupils into Year 5. Leaders use assessment information well to detect pupils in need of additional support. This is quickly put into place and pupils' progress is monitored. Leaders provide advice and guidance for colleagues in terms of planning, teaching and training. Good levels of accountability are in place for all leaders.
- Governors have been successful in their endeavours to create greater links and continuity between the first and middle schools through the federation agreement. They have overcome barriers and obstacles in the first two years, including staffing turbulence, to create a smooth continuum of education for pupils. They are knowledgeable, experienced and supportive. They have a good overview of the school's strengths and areas still in need of improvement. Governors are not afraid to challenge you regarding school issues, for example in relation to attendance. They have a good understanding of performance information and how well different groups of pupils are achieving.
- Most children join Reception class with skills and knowledge which are typical for their age, but there are some who do not have any pre-school experience and therefore have lower entry skills. However, you and your staff provide effective support to ensure that all children make good progress from their different starting points. As a result, the large majority reach a good level of development. Nevertheless, further work is needed to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged children as, although rising, their attainment remains below the national average. You have strengthened links with the local pre-school provision, and this has helped improve the transition for children starting school and helped them settle quickly. For example, children from pre-school have lunch in the school hall and use other facilities, such as the sensory garden, to help them familiarise themselves with the school, staff and pupils. There is also a pre-school staff member on the governing body. Children behave well, enjoy the activities planned and quickly adapt to routines.
- Phonics is taught well from the outset. There is a consistent approach to teaching this aspect in the early years and key stage 1. As a result, pupils build up their knowledge of letters and sounds systematically and progressively. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge well in their reading, using decodable books which are set at the right level. Good support is in place for disadvantaged pupils, including those from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community. Teaching assistants work with small groups and teachers plan imaginative activities which build well on pupils' knowledge. Reading programmes and interventions help those who are struggling to catch up. Pupils are carefully monitored and their progress tracked. As a result, almost all pupils reach the standards required by the end of Year 2. The dip in results in 2016 in Year 1 has now been rectified

and the school's own information, and evidence from the inspection, shows that pupils are back on track to be above average in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

- Pupils' writing skills are developing well. Teachers provide a range of activities to help pupils write for different audiences and different purposes. Pupils are creative, use good levels of imagery, and can write at length. They are taught cursive handwriting in the early years, and this is having a positive impact on the pupils' presentation skills. However, pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is not secure, including for the most able pupils in key stage 2. Pupils lack strategies to work spellings out or go back and check the accuracy of their grammar and punctuation. This reduces the quality of their written work and limits the proportion of pupils deemed to be working at greater depth.
- You and your leadership team have rightly identified mathematics as a whole-school priority. Work in pupils' books shows that a strong focus is placed on number work. However, on occasion, this work lacks challenge and does not move pupils on quickly enough in their learning. The use of problem-solving and reasoning skills are in the early stages of development and pupils are not yet secure in applying the number knowledge they have to solve problems or explain their thinking. This limits the depth at which pupils are able to work. As a result, the number of pupils working at greater depth in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2016 was below average. The school's own information also shows that fewer pupils are working at greater depth in mathematics in Years 1 to 3 compared to English.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress alongside others in the school. This is because additional funding received is used effectively. You have devised a robust improvement plan which targets the most vulnerable pupils in the school. Pupils' achievement is closely monitored by a dedicated teacher employed to provide specific tuition and support for vulnerable pupils, especially in mathematics. Other support is provided on an individual needs basis, including music, speech and language therapy, outdoor learning and personal and behaviour development programmes, such as 'relax kids'. All of these contribute significantly to the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Although most pupils enjoy school, an above average number are persistently absent. This affects attendance figures. Overall, attendance is below average, especially for girls, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is a barrier to their learning. You and your governors recognise this as an issue and have taken steps to build good relationships with parents. You have also invested in a minibus service to collect the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller pupils from their site. However, the impact of your actions is not yet evidenced in attendance figures, as these remain stubbornly below average by the end of the autumn term. Therefore, there remains more work to be done to engage families and highlight the importance of regular attendance at school.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including in the early years, reach the expected standard, with a proportion working at greater depth
- teachers improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in writing, and their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics
- attendance improves and persistent absence reduces for all pupils, especially girls, disadvantaged pupils and those who have special education needs and or/disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Simpson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

Lines of enquiry pursued during this inspection focused on:

- the quality of provision in the early years, especially for disadvantaged children
- how well phonics is taught and the support provided for pupils not reaching the level required in Year 1
- how leaders monitor the attendance of pupil groups
- the federation of the first school with the middle school and its impact on teaching and learning
- the use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures.

During the inspection, I met with you as executive headteacher, the acting head of school, leaders with responsibility for inclusion, mathematics, English and early years, and four members of the governing body. I discussed the work of the school with you and the head of school, and spoke with different leaders about the processes and procedures in place for safeguarding. You and the head of school

joined me on visits to all classrooms. I spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I listened to pupils read and met with pupils to gather their views about the school.

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 other school reports and information. I took account of the 18 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Additional information was collected from parents at the end of the school day, together with surveys conducted by school leaders of parents' views.