

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Christian Hilton  
Executive Headteacher  
Acorns Primary School  
School Close  
Long Compton  
Shipston-on-Stour  
Warwickshire  
CV36 5LA

Dear Mr Hilton

### **Short inspection of Acorns Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 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 September 2010.

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

Along with other school leaders, you have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In 2011, you joined the school as executive headteacher, in a federation with a local school, and in 2014 the school converted to academy status. Since the last inspection there have been many changes of staff, including the appointment of an associate headteacher. The number of pupils attending the school has doubled. This is as a result of the school's effective leadership and the improved quality of teaching.

As a leadership team, you and the associate headteacher have secured the confidence of governors, staff, parents and pupils alike. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Acorns Primary School. They agree that the school has a culture that is aspirational for all pupils and is well led and managed. Parents are extremely positive about all aspects of the school, commenting on the level of care their children are receiving. As one parent said: 'Each child is valued for their unique abilities and skills, giving them a wonderful confidence and promoting respect for each other.'

Your pupils are very well behaved and good ambassadors for the school. Older pupils speak positively about how the teachers help them to improve their work. They also value the range of trips and extra-curricular activities that they can access and the opportunities that they have to take on additional responsibilities. The school council gives pupils real opportunities to influence how the school is run. For

example, school council members played a key role in funding, planning and developing the school's new adventure playground.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to use assessment to improve pupils' progress and ensure lessons address the needs of all pupils. You have successfully addressed both of these aspects. Teachers assess pupils' work on a daily basis giving pupils timely feedback so that they are able to improve their work. Teachers also use assessment information to adapt their planning to address gaps in pupils' understanding or move them rapidly to the next stage in learning.

Across the school, we observed pupils tackling a wide range of activities. For example, we saw children in early years working in pairs on a range of 'brainy station' tasks. These were helping the children to develop cooperation and problem solving skills as well as their reading and mathematical knowledge. In Class 1, pupils were learning how to read scales on thermometers and in Class 2, to identify different types of angles. In both these lessons, pupils chose the difficulty of the task that they wanted to complete. Pupils enjoy being given this level of independence and challenge. They generally choose tasks which are at the right standard for them. In Class 3, pupils were fully engaged in a paired activity which would help them to write the biography of a fictional character. Pupils maturely reviewed an example of a similar task, identifying the strengths and where it could be improved. This was then used to help them plan their own work.

You and your staff regularly collaborate with the other schools in the federation and this provides opportunities to share effective practice and learn together. You have instilled a culture of continuous improvement, where research and development are central to your work. As a result, staff benefit from high-quality training and their skills are up to date and relevant.

You and your leadership team support staff as necessary to ensure high standards and consistency across the school. You are working on further strengthening outcomes in mathematics and have identified the need to develop pupils' reasoning skills. While pupils demonstrate a good understanding of British values, such as tolerance and respect, they do not yet have sufficient opportunity to learn about and experience wider cultures and beliefs.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Keeping children safe is at the heart of your work. You have created a team which ensures that the school is a safe environment for pupils and that they are well cared for at all times. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

All staff have had training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff are clear about what they should do if they have any concerns. You work with external agencies as necessary and are persistent when concerned about a pupil's welfare. You have a good understanding of the specific safeguarding concerns that relate to the context of the school. Governors understand their responsibilities in

relation to safeguarding and regularly monitor the effectiveness of school procedures.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they are taught how to stay safe, for example, when using the internet or crossing the road. Each class has a 'worry box' in which pupils can record any concerns. They are confident that an adult will quickly address any issues. Some older pupils are trained as peer mediators, to help deal with any friendship difficulties or bullying, but say that their input is rarely needed.

## **Inspection findings**

- Progress across the school continues to improve and the great majority of pupils make at least good progress. The small number of pupils in each year group means that headline data can vary considerably from year to year but your current in-school data predicts strong outcomes at the end of early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. At the end of key stage 1, you expect more pupils to achieve at the higher standards than was the case in 2016. The accuracy of your assessment system is checked when teachers within school, the federation and your local consortium of schools meet to compare outcomes and standards. Evidence seen during the inspection supports your judgements.
- Increasingly, you are addressing the needs of all your pupils, including the most able, through effective planning in which teachers ensure that work is suitably challenging. Pupils apply, explain, improve and edit their work across a wide range of subjects. Reading, writing and mathematics skills are developed across the curriculum and standards of presentation are generally high. Leaders are aware that there are sometimes inconsistencies between classes and take action to address these.
- Disadvantaged pupils, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, each have an individual plan which tackles their specific barriers to learning. You and your team regularly review these plans and track the impact of any input to ensure that it is helping the pupils to make good progress. You use additional funding well to provide in-class support or small group sessions, access to extra-curricular activities and support for the social and emotional needs of pupils. In-school data shows that the majority of disadvantaged pupils are working at the standard expected for their age. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance was above the national average in 2016. Current attendance remains high for all groups of pupils.
- Since the introduction of the revised national curriculum in 2014, outcomes in mathematics have been lower than those in reading and writing. You and your staff have taken action to address this. For example, you have introduced a daily focus on basic number skills. The 'total recall' badges pupils achieve by demonstrating their calculation skills are motivational for pupils of all ages. There is also a greater focus on developing pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, you have identified the teaching of reasoning as an area that requires further input to ensure that pupils can successfully apply their mathematical

knowledge. Outcomes and progress in mathematics are now more closely in line with other subjects.

- You and your staff provide pupils with a rich and varied curriculum which is adapted to meet their needs and interests. You send information to parents so that they know the topics their children will be learning about each half-term. Pupils and class teachers use an app to share classwork with parents. This helps to increase parents' involvement with their child's learning.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, along with the development of British values, is evident from a range of displays around school, your website and the way in which pupils' behaviour reflects the school's values. Pupils have an understanding about democracy and voting, having recently taken part in a mock general election. Older pupils talk about the importance of tolerance and respect for others and you have recently started a whole-school project based on developing pupils' understanding of the Equalities Act. However, pupils do not have as good an understanding of different cultures and beliefs. Extending pupils opportunities to learn about these aspects is an area for further work.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given more opportunities for reasoning in mathematics to further improve their outcomes
- staff expand pupils' knowledge, understanding and experiences of different cultures and beliefs.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Crooks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I met with you, the school's associate headteacher and members of staff. I met with six governors including the vice-chair of governors and I spoke to the school's external adviser by telephone. I talked with parents at the start of the day and with pupils both formally and informally.

Together we visited all classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke to pupils and looked at the work in some books. I observed pupils' behaviour in

lessons and around school. I scrutinised several documents including your school self-evaluation, information for parents about the curriculum and documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of 29 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 20 comments received electronically. I also took account of 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.