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Mr Tom Burton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Burton

### **Short inspection of Cabot Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 November 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 January 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team are fully committed to ensure that all pupils and their families are supported effectively. You demonstrate high aspirations for your pupils. You prioritise pupils' welfare and core reading skills. Increasingly, this helps pupils progress in their learning well.

Governors, too, are ambitious for the school. Governors are assiduous in checking progress towards meeting the school priorities and are always searching for further ways to bring about improvements. As a result, the school continues to improve.

Small cohorts and the absence of information about some pupils' previous attainment means that published attainment and progress measures do not accurately reflect pupils' progress in the school. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils make good progress during their time at Cabot Primary School. Teaching instils a strong desire in pupils to achieve.

As a result of your strong leadership, the school has continued to perform well. All pupils I spoke to enjoy school life and the high-quality training ensures that staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to thrive. Many staff you have trained move on to promotion elsewhere. This, alongside other temporary staffing arrangements, has slowed down the school's improvement over the past academic year. Governors recognise the challenge of regular staff recruitment in a smaller than average-sized primary school. They are currently consulting on forming a multi-academy trust with a group of schools to sustain the momentum of improvement.

You and your deputy lead the school with an infectious desire for improvement. Staff and pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the help and support they receive. Similarly, all the parents and carers I spoke with valued the lengths leaders, teachers and support staff go to put them at ease. They appreciate the many ways staff keep them informed about their child's progress. The school's curriculum is rich in experiences which motivate pupils to concentrate well and support them to build their knowledge effectively. Teachers encourage pupils to play their part and develop the attributes they need to make a valuable contribution to society.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that teachers had sufficiently high expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve. You have tackled this aspect successfully. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that pupils receive the support and challenge they need to achieve well. Over the past three years, a greater proportion of Year 6 pupils have reached the highest standards than have pupils nationally. Work in books shows that the most able pupils continue to achieve well throughout the school. In addition, more of the pupils whose ability was previously average make strong progress to produce work at the higher standards.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Your team ensures that systems and procedures reflect the latest government guidance. As soon as visitors enter the school, the strong emphasis on safeguarding is clear for all to see. School staff fully understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. All parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, believe their child is safe at school. Pupils say that they are happy in school and that there is 'always someone to go to if we have worries'. The school's curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe.

Governors check that the school staff scrupulously maintain effective procedures to determine the suitability of adults working at the school. Leaders are resolute in working with external agencies to ensure that families receive the support they need. They are vigilant in acting upon any concerns they have over a pupil's welfare.

### **Inspection findings**

- To establish that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was to explore how effective leaders have been in ensuring effective teaching of reading and phonics. This is because, there was a dip in the number of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening checks in 2018. In addition, pupils' progress in reading has been weaker than in other subjects.
- Leaders have an absolute focus on supporting pupils' vocabulary acquisition.
- Extra support for pupils' early reading skills is effective. By the time pupils leave Year 2, most pupils use their phonics knowledge accurately to decode unfamiliar words. In addition, teachers ensure that pupils can read key words and apply

those words in their writing. However, sometimes there is a mismatch between what pupils do in class and what they do in small-group support or one-to-one sessions. On occasions, teachers do not build upon the small steps that pupils learn in their smaller groups. As a result, pupils' progress slows.

- Leaders have invested heavily in reading resources and staff training. Teachers' emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand what they read is a key focus across a wide range of subjects. In addition, teachers and teaching assistants model the appropriate use of language effectively. However, a continuing challenge for your school is to develop pupils' abilities to make inferences from the information they read.
- Teachers engender a love of reading. The library is a bright and enticing space filled with high-quality books. Pupils value discussing their book choices with the school librarian. Pupils' enthusiasm for reading is palpable. Their eyes open wide with excitement when they talk about books. They read widely and often.
- A further line of enquiry focused on the quality of teaching in mathematics. The school has been successful in developing pupils' fluency and recall of number facts. As a result, more pupils are achieving the expected standards in mathematics in the early years and in key stage 1. However, you have recently introduced strategies to develop pupils' reasoning skills because pupils are less confident in applying their number facts to solve problems. This work is in its early stages. Pupils' workbooks show that teachers are beginning to challenge pupils with reasoning activities more often. Consequently, pupils are gaining in confidence and ability in their reasoning.
- Finally, we focused on attendance. Pupils' attendance has been too low. The proportion of pupils who have been persistently absent from school has been high for several years. You and the school's learning mentor have tackled this problem determinedly. Your team has reached out to parents of pupils who have poor attendance in a supportive yet uncompromising way. As a result of the concerted efforts leaders have made, persistent absence has reduced significantly, and pupils' overall attendance has improved.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of the weakest readers in key stage 1 is improved through making sure that whole-class and support sessions consistently build on pupils' knowledge and understanding
- pupils develop their abilities to make inferences from the information they read
- the quality of teaching improves further so that pupils build on their reasoning skills to deepen their mathematical understanding.

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

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I worked closely with you and your deputy. Together we made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to scrutinise their work. I spoke with staff, pupils and four members of the governing body. I also listened to pupils read.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, and attendance, behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of the 12 responses to the Parent View online survey, 17 responses to the staff survey and seven responses to the pupil survey.