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Mr Samuel Compton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Compton

### **Short inspection of Parkside Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2019 with Jo Evans HMI, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 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 specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your deputy headteacher, together with a highly skilled local governing body, provide strong and effective leadership. There are many aspects of the school's work that have improved since the predecessor school's last inspection. Staff morale is high and is reflected in the positive responses from staff to Ofsted's online survey. You and the staff team promote and uphold the school's values, 'Care to learn and learn to care.' The welfare, care and attention your staff provide for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are first class. All parents that inspectors spoke with, rightly, agree that their children flourish at Parkside. Many pupils told inspectors that they love school because they can make and keep friendships and enjoy everything they do in lessons, extra-curricular activities, visits and events.

Pupils behave and achieve exceptionally well. National test results, teachers' assessments and pupils' work show that, in relation to their starting points, pupils in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 make great progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' independent writing improves very well as they progress through the school. Pupils reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics

by the end of Years 2 and 6. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' work, progress and behaviour. Leaders and staff provide a rich curriculum that is planned very well to build on what pupils already know and can do. Inspectors were very impressed with the workbooks you call 'Weaving magic into writing', which links interesting and varied topics and projects that inspire pupils to produce well-structured writing. In Year 6, for example, pupils showed maturity and great understanding of some complex topics such as the international civil rights movements and how these affect the lives of many vulnerable minority groups in different parts of the world.

The staff across the early years settings provide stimulating opportunities for Nursery and Reception children to explore and make choices during exciting indoor and outdoor activities. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is typically high, reflecting strong practice across the early years. The teaching of phonics is highly effective. This is reflected in the consistently high proportion of pupils in key stage 1 that reach the required standard.

Improvements to the teaching in all parts of the school are helping pupils to achieve exceptionally well. We could see very clearly when observing lessons in key stage 2, looking at pupils' work in books and talking to them, that they thrive on the many opportunities they have to read widely and often and to draft and edit their writing. Very good use is made of traditional and modern stories, as well as poetry, play-scripts and non-fiction books to help pupils develop a love of reading and to construct accurate and well-formed independent, extended writing. Current and past national assessments show that the teaching of mathematics is strong. Pupils make outstanding progress in all areas of mathematics and reach high standards by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Leaders and staff provide a curriculum and enrichment activities that make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about the world's major faiths and customs. Pupils and families are encouraged to engage in events and activities on the theme of respecting rights and responsibilities to share and appreciate cultural diversity. In addition, pupils adopt core British values of tolerance and democracy, as well as respecting the views, beliefs and values of others.

The range of work in pupils' books and on displays around the school is of high quality. The work pupils engage in and recorded in their 'Parkside adventure books' develops their interest and curiosity in history, science, the arts and geography. You and your staff have been successful in maintaining a stimulating curriculum. The school's inclusive values and its close partnership with other schools and the local community have a positive impact on pupils' academic and personal development. You and your staff team have high expectations and continually analyse how to make things better. You rightly evaluated with leaders, governors and staff that there is scope now for pupils to do even better across all subjects of the national curriculum. Inspectors agree, as we found, that some of the work pupils do could still be more challenging. Some pupils have the potential to learn in even greater depth in all subjects, not just in English and mathematics.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff vetting procedures for checking the identity of staff, visitors and governors are secure. The indoor and outdoor areas, including the early years areas, are clean and safe. The provision made for the youngest children, ranging from two to five years of age throughout the early years settings meet the required safeguarding and welfare requirements. Safeguarding and child-protection training for staff is carried out systematically. The staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection and the safety of pupils. All parents that I spoke with and the vast majority responding to surveys and commenting by text rightly believe that their children are safe and happy in school. Leaders and staff are fully trained in the national 'Prevent' strategy. They keep up to date with the strategy to ensure that any concerns about the risks associated with radicalisation are recorded and notified to the appropriate authorities.

## **Inspection findings**

- Stimulating experiences in art, history and special topics enable pupils to write to a high standard. Good examples in key stage 2 include imaginative letter writing, where pupils write as if they are Henry VIII writing sympathetically to Anne Boleyn as she is locked in the Tower of London; poems inspired by images from famous paintings; and well-formed and accurate accounts of the Roman period after visiting a historic site. These and many more experiences broaden pupils' vocabulary, helping them to read and write with confidence, accuracy and fluency.
- Phonics is very well taught in the early years and key stage 1, providing solid foundations for pupils' reading development. Pupils in key stage 2 read widely and often. The pupils that met with inspectors could cite many examples of authors and genres they enjoy most. Listening to pupils read aloud, we found that they are confident and capable readers which is helping them access the school's broader curriculum. There is potential now for even more pupils to exceed age-related standards in all subjects of the school's planned curriculum, so they can learn and develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding in greater depth.
- Mathematics is extremely well taught across the school. National test results by the end of key stage 2 typically place the school in the top rankings of schools nationally for both progress and attainment measures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can apply their number skills and understanding of key concepts, such as fractions, percentages and decimalisation, to solve complex problems. Lessons are typically challenging and made interesting by teachers. For example, I observed pupils in Year 6 applying their knowledge of fractions and percentages very well to budget for their up-and-coming end-of-year prom.
- Your strong and ambitious leadership is respected, and parents pay tribute to the way you have transformed the school since its previous inspection before academisation. The multi-academy trust is very effective in overseeing the work of the school and the local governing body. Governance is strong and there are

clear lines of accountability between the trust and governors which are very effective in holding leaders and staff to account for the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes.

- Your leaders and staff work closely with the trust to forge strong partnerships with other schools. These include excellent links with a teaching school and the initial teacher training provision of Keele and North Staffordshire Teacher Education. The professional development and training of teachers and support staff are strong features of your leadership and that of the trust.
- A key feature of your effective leadership and that of the multi-academy trust is the continuous improvement that you, the staff and governors aspire towards. Leaders, governors and staff carry out regular peer reviews with other schools and external advisers to ensure that evaluations of the work you do are objective and accurate. All aspects of the school's improvement planning, and the priorities agreed by leaders for sustained improvement are very well informed by accurate evaluations of teachers' performance and assessments of pupils' achievement. I can see why you have headlined your school development plan with the phrase, 'There is no limit'. This is an accurate depiction of ambitious and highly effective leadership culture at all levels across the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to focus on sustaining high standards and strong pupil progress, so that in all subjects of the school's curriculum, pupils learn in greater depth.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body, the chair of the board of trustees, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust (The Creative Learning Partnership Trust), the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Staffordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you, the deputy headteacher and the teacher responsible for managing SEND provision. I met with five governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. Inspectors visited lessons in the early years and key stage 2 with you and your deputy headteacher and we spoke with pupils, as well as observing their work in books. Key stage 1 pupils were taking part in their annual summer visit with staff and volunteers, so my colleague HMI looked at their work in books. Inspectors spoke with some parents at the start of the day and considered the 97

responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire and 94 free-text comments from parents. I considered the views of staff from those responding to an online questionnaire. Inspectors scrutinised the school's improvement plan and leaders' evaluations of the school's work. I analysed national and school assessment information to consider pupils' attainment and progress. I checked staff vetting and safeguarding procedures with the school's bursar. Inspectors also met with you and the staff responsible for managing safeguarding procedures to discuss the school's procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils.