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Mr Richard Riordan  
Headteacher  
Portishead Primary School  
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Somerset  
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Dear Mr Riordan

### **Short inspection of Portishead Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 25 June 2019, 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 March 2014.

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

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

You continue to lead the school with an unwavering commitment to secure the best possible education for the pupils. When you talk about the school, your passion and determination to strive forward and continually improve provision shine through. This passion has also been identified by parents and carers, whose comments included, 'The school's values feel like they are being championed from the top', 'I just wish I could have gone to a school like this' and 'excellent school with amazing values, extremely well led'.

You and your leaders are very clear about the successes of the school and also about the areas where improvement is still needed. Self-evaluation is honest and provides a firm foundation for further improvement. You are outward looking and have the humility to seek guidance and support to continue your journey of improvement. For example, while there have been recent improvements in the early years provision, you are aware that there is further work to do in this area.

The local board of governors is a strength. Governors have the expertise and skills to monitor closely the work of the school. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide leaders with high-quality support and challenge.

Lighthouse Schools Partnership, the multi-academy trust of which the school is a member, plays an important role in the work of the school, providing an appropriate balance of challenge and support to the school.

Portishead Primary is a happy school. Pupils are polite and courteous. The strong relationships between staff and pupils are pivotal to the success of the school. The vision, 'this is me', is evident. The vision that pupils will become, 'resilient children, lifelong learners, aspiring leaders and global citizens' is demonstrated throughout the school. Attitudes to learning are positive and pupils want to do well. The responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, indicate that many parents are extremely happy with the quality of education and care their children receive.

At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included: how the school ensures that pupils are safe and behave well; how leaders have driven forward improvements in teaching and learning, especially in mathematics and for disadvantaged pupils; the effectiveness of the early years provision; and the effectiveness of the curriculum. These key lines of enquiry are considered below under 'safeguarding' and 'inspection findings'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. Governors have a robust approach to monitoring the culture of safeguarding to ensure that it remains strong. For example, they monitor the single central record regularly to ensure that it is accurate and contains the information required. Such checks help to minimise risk to pupils.

There is a shared understanding by staff of the need to protect each pupil from every possible risk. Staff receive high-quality training and receive the latest guidance on all aspects of keeping pupils safe. Staff new to the school have this as part of their induction. This ensures that staff are able to spot concerns quickly and take appropriate action with confidence.

Pupils described to me how they feel safe in school, are well looked after and listened to by staff. For example, they talked about how they appreciate the 'worry box' where they can alert staff to any concerns they have. They stated that they are confident that a member of staff is always available should they have any worries or concerns.

Parents are confident about the safety of their children in school. Many parents who responded to the Ofsted survey state that their child is happy at school, safe and well looked after. 'My child has really thrived at this school' and 'The school's positive approach to diversity and difference, and its emphasis on respect has helped to create a culture where my child is happy, nurtured and accepted' are just two of the many positive comments I received from parents.

## Inspection findings

- Evidence viewed during the inspection shows that behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour policies are comprehensive and well known and adhered to by staff. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the behaviours not tolerated in school, including physical aggression, verbal abuse and bullying. They are aware of the school's system for tackling inappropriate behaviour and for rewarding positive behaviour.
- Pupils comment how behaviour is good in school. Pupils appointed as anti-bullying ambassadors are highly effective. For example, pupils told me how they arranged a white T-shirt day. This initiative was to promote positive behaviour, through pupils writing compliments on the T-shirts about the people wearing them. In addition, pupils talked about the role of the 'upstanders', pupils who are on the lookout to see what is happening and take action to promote good behaviour. Pupils are confident that, as a result of the work on behaviour in school, bullying has 'really reduced', there are 'fewer arguments between friends' and school is 'a happier place to be'. Pupils are confident that bullying is now extremely rare and, if it does happen, it is very quickly sorted.
- Outcomes for pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2 remain above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, you told me that you were disappointed with the dip in pupils' progress at the end of 2018 in key stage 2, especially for your few disadvantaged pupils. You did not hesitate to seek support from the trust and a local leader in education to ensure that this dip is not repeated. As a result, pupils' work shows that there is now no discernible difference in the progress of disadvantaged pupils when compared to their peers in reading, writing or mathematics.
- In the early years, children are happy and keen to learn, and behave well. They have access to high-quality provision. There is, for example, a new outdoors environment, and a growing area where children grow and cultivate a variety of plants. They interact well with each other and with staff. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development remains above the national average. However, you recognise that, from their starting points, children could make better progress by the end of the early years.
- You recognised that boys' achievement at the end of their year in Reception was not as good as girls'. You and your leaders took swift action to ensure that boys had access to learning activities that better meet their needs. Recent work shows strong improvement in boys' outcomes. Furthermore, boys in Year 1 are catching up with girls and make strong progress, especially in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is broad and covers a wide range of subjects. However, you have identified correctly that the curriculum of wider subjects does not build pupils' skills and knowledge year by year or subject by subject well enough. You are working hard with the Lighthouse Partnership trust and your subject leaders to develop a curriculum which better meets the needs and interests of your pupils. In addition, you are aware of the need to provide increased opportunities for all

subject leaders to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision across the school in the subjects they lead.

- Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities. For example, pupils talked with excitement about the residential trips afforded to them like Barton Camp. Other activities pupils have access to include music, sports and the arts. There is a strong focus on the local community. This was exemplified when pupils spoke with passion about the environment and, following their work at Portishead Marina, the impact of plastics in our oceans. They told us of their contribution to fighting marine pollution through 'Turn the Tide Portishead', and how they work together to ensure a clean and tidy school and community.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to drive forward improvements in the early years provision
- further develop a curriculum that develops pupils' skills so that they make the best possible progress across all subjects
- develop the capacity for subject leaders across the curriculum to monitor and evaluate what is, or is not, working well and why, in the subjects they lead.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for North Somerset. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and your senior leaders. Together, we viewed learning across the school and looked at pupils' work. I also held discussions with governors, middle leaders and staff. I met with pupils and spoke informally to them during the inspection. In addition, I considered the 99 responses from the pupil survey.

I looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and information relating to pupils' current achievement and progress. I also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

I spoke with parents during the day and took into account the 53 responses to the online survey, 'Parent View', and considered additional comments received from parents via the free-text message service and other correspondence. I held a

telephone conversation with a parent. I also considered the 31 responses received to the staff questionnaire.