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Mrs Julie Robinson  
Headteacher  
Sheet Primary School  
School Lane  
Petersfield  
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Dear Mrs Robinson

### **Short inspection of Sheet Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 January 2016, 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 October 2010.

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

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher in April 2015, you have galvanised leaders into action, providing clear vision and renewed energy to drive forward improvements so that the school can become outstanding in the future. Leaders pinpoint areas for improvement accurately so that they can ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well. Staff feel valued and view the changes you have made positively. Parents welcome your open communication with them about the changes you have made. They support the wider values that the school promotes and feel that their children are making good progress and 'thriving'. One parent commented that their son is 'praised for working hard and challenging himself, as well as being kind to those around him – exactly what I want in a school.'

Pupils enjoy school and achieve well because leaders ensure that the values of 'perseverance, respect, positivity and effort' underpin the curriculum. Leaders have made positive changes to the way in which the values of the school are shared and understood by all members of the community. Consequently, pupils show confidence and resilience in their approach to work. This was captured during an assembly focusing on the values displayed by Olympic athletes, where one pupil said, 'I shouldn't think to myself ever that I couldn't do it.' Carefully chosen opportunities that widen pupils' experiences of life beyond their own community, such as a twinning project with the Kyambua School in Uganda, strengthen pupils' preparation for adult life.

You and other senior leaders focus closely on ensuring that all pupils make the progress that they should. You have made sure that pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs continue to receive quality support and make good progress. Their achievement in reading, for example, is above that of other pupils nationally by the time that they leave the school. Overall, pupils' outcomes are good, including for the very small number of disadvantaged pupils.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve the quality of teaching so that expectations of what pupils could achieve were raised and assessment information supported learning more closely. In addition, inspectors recommended that leaders' skills in checking the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes and in securing an effective progression of skills in a wider range of subjects were strengthened. Leaders have tackled these areas effectively so that:

- leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher and, as a result, teaching is improving. Leaders' checks ensure that that new teaching staff receive regular feedback from leaders about the effectiveness of their teaching and the impact it is having on pupil outcomes
- assessment systems support teachers to know the gaps that they need to address in pupils' learning
- new subject leaders have the right support and professional development to further improve teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils can make good progress in a range of subjects.

You have wasted no time in tackling the areas that need improvement. However, phonics teaching is not yet consistently meeting the needs of girls and too few of them reach the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1. Although leaders have already taken steps to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), this has not been fully effective. Similarly, support for the small group of pupils in Year 2 who did not secure a good level of development at the end of early years has not enabled them to catch up with their peers quickly enough. Leaders know that this needs to be addressed through improvements they are making to teaching. In addition, leaders in subjects other than English and mathematics have not evaluated the extent to which their work has improved pupils' outcomes. This means that they are not able to pinpoint accurately the actions needed to secure good or better progress for pupils in these subjects.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders take safeguarding seriously and ensure that staff receive regular training. All senior leaders hold recently updated and relevant qualifications. Parents, staff and pupils are united in their view that pupils are safe in school. There are well-planned opportunities for pupils to learn to keep themselves safe, including e-safety. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the risks associated with accessing or sharing information online and other risks to their personal safety.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff take an active approach to safeguarding, following up concerns swiftly and ensuring that recruitment and vetting procedures are robust. They ensure that they seek the right advice and support when necessary, working with a range of agencies. All current policies reflect the most recent national guidance and leaders have a clear grasp of their new duties, such as keeping pupils safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

## **Inspection findings**

- Since your appointment, the energy and determination you bring have strengthened the work of the school and secured improving outcomes for pupils. Your personal commitment is valued by parents and they feel well informed about the changes you have made. Staff respect and trust your decision making. Your vision for the school is understood and shared by the whole school community.
- Your leadership inspires staff at all levels. You have developed a strong leadership team to drive forward improvements and increase the pace of transformation in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. For example, teachers now focus on the use of key texts to improve progress in writing. Pupils spoke animatedly of the whole-school 'rumpus' which launched their focus on 'Where the Wild Things Are'. Pupils' writing shows an improved use of language for effect. One Year 6 pupil introduced their wild creature for a class writing compendium in the following way: 'Exceedingly rare, you are unlikely to spot a Wyvern due to them thriving in an inhospitable environment.'
- Parents praise the work of the school highly. They value the contribution the school makes to pupils' personal and academic development. They feel welcome in school and appreciate the time staff take to discuss pupils' individual needs. Parents feel confident that staff know their children well.
- Changes to the way in which assessment information is gathered and used in early years have improved children's achievement across all areas of learning. Teachers use the information captured in challenge books to target gaps in children's skills, knowledge and understanding. Challenges stretch children's thinking and inspire their curiosity. Consequently, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the early years has risen significantly and is now well above the national average.
- Leaders make regular checks on actions they take to improve teaching in English and mathematics. While leaders in other subjects take effective action to improve teachers' subject knowledge and support planning, they do not check how effective their work has been in ensuring that pupils are making good or better progress. Consequently, they do not know precisely how well pupils are achieving in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Teachers who are new to the school are supported well to develop their practice through external support, partnership working and coaching. For

example, they know which aspects of teaching, learning and assessment they need to improve because the regular feedback they receive from leaders is astute and helpful.

- Leaders hold regular meetings with staff to review the progress pupils are making. They know which pupils are at risk of falling behind and make changes to teaching, learning and assessment as a result. There is a clear plan for all the additional support that pupils receive. Leaders evaluate the impact of this support regularly.
- Governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the changes the new leadership team is making. They regularly review performance information to ensure that groups of pupils, such as those who are disadvantaged, are achieving as well as other pupils nationally. They successfully focus their evaluation activity on the key priorities for improvement.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across all year groups. Their attainment at the end of the early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is above national averages. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making expected or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to that of other pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Excellent support to promote skills in reading ensures that these pupils achieve above all other pupils nationally in reading by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Last year, the proportion of pupils securing the expected standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 dipped. This was because teaching did not ensure that girls made sufficient progress. Checks made on pupils' current rates of progress and achievement in phonics show that, again, too few girls in the current Year 1 are on track to reach the expected standard by the end of the year.
- The vast majority of pupils begin Key Stage 2 at or above the standards expected for their age. Some pupils do not make the progress that they should to enable them to catch up from their starting points at the end of the early years. This is because teaching does not focus sharply on the most significant gaps in pupils' learning.
- Attendance is above the national average. Persistent absence is low. Individual pupils who do not attend as often as they should are successfully supported and their attendance has risen.
- Pupils develop their sense of responsibility and moral courage extremely well. Pupils enjoy receiving 'values certificates' and show a strong ability to celebrate the achievements of other pupils. There is an increased participation in a wide range of additional activities, including STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) days.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils are articulate and sociable. They are enthusiastic in their learning, complete work diligently and engage in productive dialogue with teachers about ways to improve their work further.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they target actions to improve teaching learning and assessment so that the progress of pupils who need to catch up in Key Stage 1 is accelerated
- teaching focuses more sharply on identifying the most appropriate next steps for pupils in phonics so that more girls secure the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1
- all subject leaders regularly evaluate the impact of their work so that they can accurately pinpoint actions to secure good or better progress for pupils across a wide range of subjects.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Abigail Wilkinson

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other leaders, teachers, pupils and four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I visited six lessons with you and observed pupils' work in phonics and writing. We observed the individual support pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs receive in two sessions. I took account of 10 responses to the schools' internal staff survey and 62 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered 70 responses by pupils to their online survey and a further 32 written comments from parents. I spoke with a group of pupils drawn from Key Stages 1 and 2. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' current performance, plans for additional support and intervention, the school improvement plan, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and safeguarding policies and procedures. I reviewed the schools' work to support pupils' personal and social development, looking at a small sample of pupils' work and attending an assembly. I discussed your own evaluation of the schools' performance with you.