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Caroline Skingsley  
Headteacher  
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Goldington Green  
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Dear Mrs Skingsley

### **Short inspection of Goldington Green Academy**

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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2010.

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

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

Many things make Goldington Green Academy a wonderful school. The pupils I spoke to explained with great confidence why they are so proud of their school and why they like their teachers; mostly because 'they make lessons so interesting and fun'. Pupils are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about what they are learning in class. They cited, in particular, their work on the Second World War and conducting experiments in science. They also love their music, sports and physical education and are thrilled about the numerous trips, festivals, performances and clubs they can take part in.

Ensuring the highest levels of care and welfare to promote the well-being of all pupils, regardless of their background, is at the heart of everything you and your staff do. With their support and that of governors you have established a truly welcoming and harmonious school community where everyone gets on extremely well together. A good example of this inclusive approach is the way pupils in the special autism unit (The Conifer class) are given every opportunity to join in whole-school activities. The youngest children settle fantastically well in Reception. The support for pupils who have only just arrived in this country is

impressive. This is because of the exemplary understanding of the varied cultural, linguistic and emotional needs of these families.

Pupils say that there is no bullying and that bad behaviour is not tolerated. They also say that any issues are dealt with quickly and that they would have no hesitation in telling an adult if they were worried about anything. The 'blue buddies' and council members were bursting with pride as they told me how important their work is in helping others. Pupils can explain that their school's values ensure that everyone is encouraged to do their best, are respected and get on with one another.

You are providing strong leadership and a clear vision to ensure that every child succeeds. The best features of your leadership are the :

- full inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of school life
- accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning
- comprehensive and well-targeted training of staff
- excellent tracking of pupils' progress to spot and support any pupil falling behind.

With the help of your deputy headteacher, other leaders and governors, you are constantly reflecting on the strengths of the school and are identifying where further improvement might be achieved. You have successfully addressed the areas identified in need of further improvement at your previous Ofsted inspection. The outdoor provision for children in the Reception classes and communication with families about their children's progress are much improved. Staff understand and apply the assessment and marking policy effectively. There are good examples of pupils improving their work as a result.

Parents and carers are very happy with the way the school is led. A parent newly arrived in England said that the school was 'amazing'. Just over 20 parents expressed their views of the school through Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents) and a further 10 sent me additional comments. Almost all were very positive, particularly about the good progress their children are making. This visit confirms that pupils make good progress at the school although more needs to be done to improve the attendance and accelerate the progress of some pupils with special educational needs and to ensure that the few disadvantaged pupils who are more able achieve their full potential.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The strong sense of community, the commitment to supporting others and the staff's understanding of the school's policies ensure that pupils are safe. Senior leaders are approachable and highly visible around the school. Parents and pupils know that any concerns they have will be addressed promptly.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust. The leadership team ensures that all staff and governors have frequent and relevant training. The school works well with

external agencies to secure effective support for pupils. Your staff go the extra mile to ensure that families in need of intensive support are helped so that their children's education does not suffer at times of crisis. You do not shy away from challenging the local authority about the quality and timeliness of some early help assessments (EHA).

You are dealing with sensitive matters exceptionally well. Your deputy headteacher explained very proficiently the robust way in which the rare risk of radicalisation and extremism are investigated. Your staff are fully aware of what to do if there is a safeguarding concern.

## **Inspection findings**

- Your ambition to make the school outstanding requires that all teachers develop their expertise further to ensure that teaching and learning are of the highest quality across all subjects and classes. The positive impact of your leadership is particularly visible in your excellent links with families, pupils' improved attendance and the better standards in spelling, punctuation and cursive writing.
- The governors are highly knowledgeable and bring a wealth of expertise to the school. Because you provide the governing body with a clear analysis of assessment information, governors are very effective in holding the school to account. They use this information well to improve outcomes, although some pupils with special educational needs and the more able disadvantaged pupils do not always achieve as highly as they could.
- Your improvement plan is fit for purpose and supports your aims for the school well. You have set ambitious targets and clear actions to make sure that pupils' outcomes are at least at the national expectation as soon as possible. Children in Reception get off to a flying start and you rightly want to consolidate the progress of boys in the early years so that they are even better prepared for Year 1.
- Results in the phonics tests are below average at the end of Year 1 but pupils achieve well over the whole key stage. They then continue to make rapid progress in Years 3 and 4 and are well prepared for transition to the middle schools. Their confident oral skills are a particular strength.
- Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations for conduct around the school and for learning in class. Bullying is rare and taken very seriously. Pupils want to attend school. They are very keen to take on responsibilities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- You participate in and benefit from a wide range of networks. The local authority is rightly complimentary about your leadership of the autism unit and about the way you accurately moderate pupils' work alongside other schools. In a range of subjects and topics, such as curriculum development,

creative dance and the management of behaviour, teachers are often asked to contribute to best practice workshops. The school's English as an Additional Language (EAL) manager links effectively with relevant agencies, such as the Peterborough EAL Academy and other professional study groups. All these external initiatives, including the involvement with national and local leaders of education and with the University of Bedfordshire, help teachers to reflect on their own work and to stimulate their professional curiosity.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- targeted support enables disadvantaged pupils, who are more able, to reach the high standards of which they are capable
- additional support and intervention enable some pupils with special educational needs to attend more regularly and to make better progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders and five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I met a group of pupils and spoke to many during breaktime and in class. We visited all year groups together and I checked your evaluation of teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' work and talked to them about their learning. I analysed recent assessment information about pupils' progress. I reviewed records and procedures about keeping pupils safe and about attendance. I read case studies of families in receipt of welfare support. I considered the views of 22 parents from Parent View and took account of 10 additional comments from parents. I also spoke to many parents at the beginning of the school day. I analysed questionnaire responses from nine members of staff.