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Oakley Lower School
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Dear Mrs Lovett

Short inspection of Oakley Lower School

Following my visit to the school on 19 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Despite the many changes that have occurred in the teaching staff over the past four years, you have ensured that teaching has remained effective and that good standards have been maintained.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors identified some weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing and the level of challenge given to higher-ability pupils. You were also asked to raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better. Along with other school leaders, including governors, you have ensured that the school has successfully addressed these issues. As a result of your work:

- the quality of teaching is now typically good or better
- pupils of all abilities achieve well
- pupils are given more opportunities to write in English lessons and achievement in writing has improved
- pupils behave extremely well and enjoy learning.

You are ambitious for the school and recognise that further work is required to develop pupils' writing in other subjects, such as history and geography. You also acknowledge that recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage need to be consolidated, and reflected in the assessments that are made at the end of the

Reception Year. Your improvement plans are detailed and aimed at addressing these relative weaknesses.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. Along with governors you have developed a robust culture of safeguarding which is embedded across the school. Records of adults who work with pupils are meticulous, and you ensure that all members of staff receive regular training. The school works efficiently with other agencies to ensure the safety of pupils both in school and beyond. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They know who to speak to if they are worried or concerned. They say that they get good advice about how to stay safe in different situations, whether crossing the road or playing games on the internet.

Inspection findings

- The school is a very friendly and welcoming place and there is a strong sense of community. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and respond well to the good teaching that they receive.
- You have developed strong partnerships between home and school and ensure that everyone is working together for the best interests of the pupils.
- You have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further improvement. Your improvement plans are detailed and clearly focused on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors provide a good level of support and challenge to the school. They know the school's strengths well, along with the few areas that require further improvement. They have helped you to manage the significant changes that have occurred in the teaching staff at the school over recent years, ensuring that standards have not fallen. They have also been instrumental in securing significant improvements to the school building. At all times, decisions have been carefully made to ensure that the needs of the pupils are not jeopardised.
- The systems that you use to check on the performance of staff are rigorous and effective. You have ensured that staff receive appropriate training and support and this has helped to promote improvements to pupils' learning and the progress across the school.
- Staff are highly supportive of the school's leadership team. They rightly believe that the school is well led and managed. They are fully supportive of your drive for further improvement.
- Improvements have been made to provision in the early years. Teachers and other adults ensure that children have access to a wide range of learning activities, both indoors and in the outside area. However, the assessments that teachers and other adults make of children's progress

are not always used well enough to ensure that they are provided with more tasks that provide greater levels of challenge.

- Pupils are provided with the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. During this inspection, pupils were seen working with a local artist on collages featuring the River Ouse. Older pupils also spoke of recent work involving computer programming. However, when teaching geography and history some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not set work that challenges pupils.
- You have worked effectively to improve attendance. Attendance rates fell below the national average last year and too many pupils were absent on multiple occasions. This year the school has worked well with parents to stress the importance of regular attendance and make them aware of the impact of absence on a pupil's academic progress. As a result attendance this year has improved and is currently above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy school; they behave well and have very good attitudes to learning. They are polite and friendly. They dress smartly, showing pride in their uniform. They get on well with each other and are proud of their school.
- The school's strong, nurturing ethos, coupled with the broad curriculum, helps to ensure that pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths and understand about the importance of tolerance and respect.
- Parents are supportive of the school. They rightly believe that the school is well led and managed, that pupils behave well and that teaching is good. Almost all of the parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) would recommend the school to another parent.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- pupils receive greater levels of challenge in history and geography
- staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage use assessment more effectively to plan activities that encourage children to make faster progress in their learning.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other school leaders and three members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors. I looked at work in pupils' books from across the school and together we visited all classrooms to observe teaching and learning. I also met with a group of pupils to discuss aspects of school life. I scrutinised documents relating to the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements and looked at the single central record. I looked at some of the reports you have written to governors, the school's self-evaluation and the improvement plan. I also looked at information about pupils' attendance, behaviour and welfare. I considered the views of the 34 parents who had responded to Parent View and analysed 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.