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5 February 2016

Jean Atkins  
Headteacher  
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Dear Jean Atkins

### **Short inspection of Hurst Green Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 September 2010.

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

You have led the school with a high degree of positivity, determination and resilience, and created a strong staff team and sense of community that extends beyond the school. Because you know the strengths and areas for future development so well, you have driven school improvement and kept your eye on what needs to be accomplished. For example, you know that work still needs to be done to raise attainment in writing throughout the school. You have been very receptive to support and advice given to you and implemented important changes as a result. Consequently, school leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have worked hard to build strong relationships with other professionals to provide effective provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. You have been resolute in your resolve to put in place the best possible provision to enable all learners to achieve. Despite this, a small number of parents express concern about the ability of leaders and staff to deal with challenging behaviour effectively, thereby minimising the impact on their own child's learning. During this visit, the behaviour of pupils in lessons was typically good and no boisterous behaviour was observed on the playground. In one classroom, a small number of pupils engaged in low-level disruption, such as talking too loudly and not focusing fully on their work. Adults in the room quickly addressed this and no learning time was lost. You have ensured that rules, rewards and sanctions are in place to help

pupils learn how to manage their behaviour. Pupils say that they feel happy and safe at school.

You have very ambitious expectations of how well all pupils will achieve while they are at the school and you have rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning and the way that assessment information is used to help you achieve this. This could be enhanced further through a sharper focus on targeting pupils who need to make accelerated progress so that they are able to catch up quickly with their peers, and by helping pupils to know precisely what they need to do to improve their own learning. Nevertheless, pupils across the school make good progress from their various starting points and often reach levels of attainment above those seen nationally.

You and your staff have worked effectively to meet the recommendations from the previous inspection. Writing is taught well and the attainment of pupils in writing, including that of boys, has risen. There is equity in outcomes for boys and girls. You have ensured that teachers have a growing understanding of the new assessment procedures to carefully target next steps for improvement in writing. You have instigated regular progress meetings to discuss each child's progress and achievement, and to ensure that the right strategies are in place to support learners who are falling behind. This improvement has been underpinned by the school's focus on reading, which has improved the range and complexity of vocabulary used by pupils in their writing. There have been notable improvements in achievements in the national phonics screening test at the end of Year 1.

You have worked hard to make sure that pupils come to school every day and that the importance of good attendance is communicated effectively to pupils and parents. The education welfare officer regularly helps you to monitor and implement strategies to improve attendance. Despite this, attendance is currently just below the national average, but there are recent signs that attendance is improving.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. There is a strong emphasis on well-being throughout the school's work, underpinned by thoughtful attention to ensuring that pupils develop British values through the curriculum and through effective social, emotional, spiritual and cultural experiences. Thorough checks are made on staff and other adults when they work or volunteer at the school. All staff and governors are trained in child protection procedures that are updated regularly. Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after, and the vast majority of parents agree with this view. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe on the internet and through visits from the emergency services, for example.

## Inspection findings

- Leaders, including governors, are driven to continually improve the school. Your expectations and ambition for pupils' achievement are very high. You have set challenging targets for the proportion of pupils expected to reach the appropriate level of achievement for a child of their age and for the number who are targeted to exceed it.
- The school is rightly developing the roles of staff to lead subjects and other areas of the school's work. This is important work and needs to develop further so that these emerging leaders have more opportunities to support and impact on continued improvement, and grow in confidence to contribute to the direction in which the school is going.
- Leaders evaluate the school accurately and honestly, based on a range of evidence and feedback from people supporting the school. You are able to focus on areas that need developing and you make sure that these are clearly communicated through the school improvement plan. You recognise that work needs to continue to raise standards in writing to be as high as those in reading and mathematics, and that your tireless work to improve attendance should continue.
- Leaders have worked diligently to establish links with a wide variety of professionals in order to support the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. You are acutely aware of the need to continue to seek further support from professionals to ensure that provision for this group of pupils is as effective as possible.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is typically good when they are learning in the classroom and when they are playing together at breaktime. The vast majority concentrate well in lessons and participate confidently. Pupils are able to talk about what they are learning and about their positive feelings for the school.
- You and your team have worked hard to implement a new assessment system that tracks the progress and achievement of pupils. Staff are focused on correctly assessing pupils' learning against new criteria. They are using the information to carefully plan the next steps in pupils' learning. You agree that the next stage is to focus sharply on identifying pupils who are falling behind or are stuck to help them to catch up with their peers quickly.
- The needs of pupils entitled to support through pupil premium funding are well met. This additional funding given by the government is allocated effectively and analysed thoroughly to make sure that any intervention is having an impact on pupils' progress. As a result, the gap in the achievement of this group and their peers is narrowing and at the end of Reception Year in 2015, the proportion who reached a good level of development was higher than for other children.
- Pupils are taught the early stages of reading well. They are taught the sounds that letters make, known as phonics, effectively. Pupils are helped to apply what they have learned to support their writing skills. In a Year 1 lesson, a large group of pupils spelled words such as 'shock' and 'bash' accurately and then put them into sentences to demonstrate that they understood the meaning of the words.

- Pupils' mathematical development is good. Their books show that they can respond to mathematical challenges and are beginning to use a range of strategies to solve problems.
- Pupils make good progress from their various starting points because the quality of teaching over time and effective communication between staff ensure that progress is built upon year on year. Pupils are able to talk about what they are learning and know if they have met the learning intention for the whole class.
- Children in the early years grow in confidence and are given a range of opportunities to build the foundations of writing, reading and mathematics. Children experience a range of activities that help them to develop skills across all areas of learning.
- Most parents are pleased with the school. They are particularly positive about how happy their children are, that their children feel safe and how well their children are cared for. Most rightly feel that their children are well taught and that they receive valuable information about the progress their children are making.
- You have been open to support offered to the school and you say that the support has made a positive difference. You have particularly welcomed support and collaboration with other schools. Staff have been able to share pupils' work to make sure that their judgements about how well pupils are doing are secure.
- The governing body makes a challenging and supportive contribution to the school. Governors understand the nature of their strategic responsibilities and seek out ways to check the quality of the school's work for themselves. They have a strong regard for the safety and well-being of both pupils and staff, and ensure that key areas such as safeguarding are correctly managed. They undertake training to make sure that they are better equipped and skilled to undertake their roles.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders are given increased opportunities to support and impact upon continued improvement and to grow in confidence to contribute to the strategic direction of the school
- assessment information is used to hone in on pupils who need to make accelerated progress so that they are able to catch up with their peers quickly
- partnerships with other professionals are built on to further enhance the effectiveness of support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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

Yours sincerely

Abigail Birch  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I visited parts of lessons in all classes and two interventions, most of which we visited together. I met with you, other leaders who were also teachers, and members of the governing body. I scrutinised a range of pupils' work. I took account of 25 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and to two written comments made by parents, also online. I also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day. I listened to the views of pupils informally when I observed their breaktime and talked to them when I visited lessons. I also took account of the staff responses to the voluntary staff survey. I analysed a wide range of the school's documentation, including the school improvement plan, school policies, records relating to behaviour and exclusions, and information about pupils' achievement and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I also spoke to you about your own evaluation of the effectiveness of the school.