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Mrs Susanne Ottens
Headteacher
Fairisle Infant and Nursery School
Fairisle Road
Southampton
SO16 8BY

Dear Mrs Ottens

Short inspection of Fairisle Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 November 2010.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your strong and determined leadership inspires all staff to maintain a clear focus on raising pupils' achievement. Staff are highly motivated, resourceful and committed to their work. Parents value the quality of care given to their children by all adults who work at the school. Parents welcome the workshops you provide to help them support their children's learning at home. One parent commented that children are, 'fully supported by their respective teachers and given the opportunity to achieve their full potential'.

Pupils show pleasure in their success at school and are animated when talking to adults about their learning. Pupils achieve well and develop strong moral values. This is because you and other leaders provide a curriculum that shapes their understanding of rights and responsibilities effectively. Leaders have a strong commitment to equality, shown in pupils' articulation of their rights – 'the right to be safe, to learn, to be healthy, to be listened to and be the best you can be'. This influences their attitudes towards others. Pupils show a desire to learn and behave well both in and out of lessons.

You and other senior leaders ensure that pupils who may be at risk of falling behind catch up quickly. As a result, pupils' outcomes, including those for disadvantaged pupils, are good.

At the last inspection, inspectors identified the need to raise the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1, particularly in mathematics. In addition, inspectors identified the need to develop the role of the governing body to challenge school leaders effectively. Leaders have tackled these areas effectively so that:

- teachers' subject knowledge and accuracy when using assessment to guide pupils' next steps have improved in mathematics and writing because leaders have sourced high-quality training within and beyond the federation of schools to which the school belongs
- the achievement of disadvantaged pupils combined across reading, writing and mathematics is higher than that of other pupils nationally
- governors regularly challenge the impact of leaders' actions and use a widened range of information to support their evaluation of leaders' success.

Although pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics overall, strategies to increase the achievement of boys are at an early stage. Teaching is not yet successfully accelerating the progress of boys so that their attainment catches up with that of girls by the end of Key Stage 1.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs receive well-tailored support so that they make good or better progress. However, other pupils do not always make as rapid progress, particularly in reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff have a good understanding of the latest national guidance and know the procedures they should follow if they are concerned about any pupil. Leaders have a clear grasp of their new duties and are vigilant in their identification of any pupils that may be at risk of harm. A number of senior leaders hold relevant qualifications for safeguarding, demonstrating the high level of commitment to this area of the school's work.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Concerns are addressed quickly and leaders work well with other agencies to reduce any risk of harm. Pre-employment checks on permanent staff meet requirements and detailed records are kept of checks made on visitors and temporary staff. Parents say that pupils are safe and well looked after in school and pupils agree with them. Attendance is above the national average and very few pupils are persistently absent. Leaders monitor attendance closely and are vigilant in following up any absences.

Inspection findings

- The headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for the school's journey towards becoming outstanding in the future. It is well understood by all members of the school community. Children thrive because all adults 'Expect Success' for them in their social and academic development.
- Parents feel positive about their child's educational experience. Parents see the progress their children make, particularly when they start school. One parent wrote, 'Our son has made huge leaps in his development'.
- When children start school, leaders focus closely on communication and number skills because their evaluations show that these areas need extra support. Teachers provide a language-rich environment and communication-friendly spaces such as 'hidey nooks' to encourage children to talk together. Successful small-group support means that fewer children are at risk of entering Year 1 without the skills they need in speaking and listening. In Reception, children were engaged independently in a range of play activities involving mathematics, based on their recent 'visit' to France. They used rulers to measure their Lego models of the Eiffel Tower and real baguette slices to calculate and record number sentences using subtraction, all of which they enjoyed immensely.
- Writing is well taught across the school and is characterised by high-quality dialogue between adults and pupils to improve technical accuracy and the use of vocabulary for effect. In Year 2, pupils recorded their response to the question, 'What adds impact to your writing?' by suggesting the use of ellipses and similes. Teachers take opportunities regularly to challenge pupils' thinking when they are writing so that the words pupils use are powerful and precise. Pupils confidently apply this learning, for example in carefully selecting verbs such as 'capsized' or descriptive phrases such as 'rude, disrespectful and rich'.
- All pupils work hard, showing focus and determination in their lessons. There is variation, however, between the achievement of boys and girls. Teaching is successfully addressing some of the basic skills preventing boys from improving their attainment overall. For example, more boys secured the expected standard in phonics in 2015 than in the previous year. Leaders have begun to make a number of changes to the curriculum to increase boys' engagement and interest. However, leaders recognise that there is more to do to accelerate boys' progress so that their achievement matches that of girls.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. Leaders and teachers have a clear grasp of pupils' individual needs and closely evaluate the difference teaching makes to their progress. In Year 1, for example, pupils who began the year unable to form letters correctly or use sounds to form words now write confident sequences of sentences for different purposes, including factual reports about historical figures such as Grace Darling.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good or better progress and achieve well. Their attainment is above that of all pupils nationally in mathematics and their achievement in reading and writing is close to the national average. However, other pupils, who do not receive additional support or funding, do not make the same good or better progress. Pupils whose reading is stronger, for example, receive fewer opportunities to practise and secure more complex reading skills, and consequently their progress is not as rapid.
- Governors' evaluative skills have strengthened and they ask challenging questions to check that leaders' actions make a difference. They visit regularly and ensure that subject leaders keep them well informed about changes they make to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have taken an active stance to improve their communication with parents and use the information they find out from regular surveys to inform any changes they make. Members of the governing body use a range of external partners to challenge and test out their views of the school.
- Teachers leading on non-core subjects such as computing, science and geography understand their roles well and have detailed knowledge of their subjects. They use evaluation accurately and take successful action to improve pupils' experience of learning and achievement.
- Strong values, underpinned by Unicef's Convention on the Rights of the Child, are embedded throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the additional responsibilities leaders give them as members of the school council or as rights-respecting leaders. Pupils wear the stickers they receive from their peers when they show respect for each other, such as 'for playing safely', with pride.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teachers use ongoing assessment to target gaps in boys' skills, knowledge and understanding so that their progress accelerates and their achievement matches that of girls by the end of Key Stage 1
- pupils who do not receive additional support or funding make the same good or better progress as those that do, particularly in reading.

Yours sincerely

Abigail Wilkinson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, pupils and four governors including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I visited classes in every year group with you, scrutinised pupils' writing and observed their learning. Together, we looked at a sample of guided reading records. I took account of 30 responses to the online pupil survey, 16 responses to the staff survey and 18 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered a further five written comments from parents and spoke with a parent on the telephone. I also considered 62 responses to the school's own recent survey of parents. I spoke with a group of pupils from across the school. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' current performance, leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and safeguarding policies and procedures. I discussed your own evaluation of the school's performance with you.