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3 March 2016

Mr M Ackers  
Principal  
Oreston Community Academy  
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Dear Mr Ackers

### **Short inspection of Oreston Community Academy**

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 May 2011.

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

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

Your vision of developing a strong 'pupil voice' has led to pupils contributing to their own learning and taking their responsibilities seriously, for example in encouraging more wildlife in the school environment and setting up enterprising 'market' stalls. The vision is shared by governors, staff, pupils and parents.

Pupils and parents value the exceptional range of opportunities for learning that you provide. Among the many positive comments made by parents was an appreciation of the allotment, trips and community events. Pupils say that they enjoy trying out the different clubs and sports on offer. Such activities make a very positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also support pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. Pupils are keen to learn, attend school regularly and behave very well.

You and other senior and middle leaders are effective in ensuring that the school continues to improve. You have addressed successfully the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection relating to pupils' progress in writing and senior and subject leaders' analysis of pupils' assessment information. As a result, pupils' progress continues to rise, especially in the early years and Key Stage 1 where attainment is above average. You are taking appropriate action to raise

standards in mathematics and for the most-able pupils in Key Stage 2. Due to effective teaching and support, pupils who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils achieve as well, and often better, than others.

The quality of teaching is good overall. There are examples of outstanding practice where, through skilful use of assessment and feedback on pupils' work, teachers promote pupils' rapid progress. This practice is not yet consistent throughout the school. Middle leaders check pupils' work in their books and their progress information regularly, but are not observing and developing the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

Governors maintain an in-depth knowledge of the school's performance, for example through visits and monitoring the progress on the school improvement plan. They ensure that funding and resources, including the pupil premium, are used effectively to promote good progress for all pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs or disability and disadvantaged pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, other leaders and administration staff have ensured that procedures meet requirements for safer recruitment. All required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are carried out and recorded well. All staff are trained in safeguarding at appropriate levels and have a good understanding of the school's policy and procedures. Procedures for identifying pupils who may be at risk of harm are carried out, recorded and followed up appropriately.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and the senior leadership team evaluate rigorously and accurately the school's performance in all areas. You use this information to identify the most relevant priorities in your school improvement planning, such as developing pupils' skills in mathematics and increasing the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in Key Stage 2.
- You are rightly developing the skills of subject and year group leaders so that they can support improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. These enthusiastic middle leaders examine pupils' work and match this to the progress information. Together with class teachers, they identify gaps in pupils' learning and ensure that appropriate support is provided for the pupils. They are not yet observing teaching and learning in lessons in order to provide support that is tailored to the needs of individual teachers.
- Staff training for teachers and support staff is focused well on the specific areas of teaching and learning that need improving, such as developing pupils' skills in reasoning, problem solving and spelling. This, together with effective management of staff performance, leads to teaching that is good overall, with some examples of outstanding teaching. As you have identified, the best practice is not yet shared throughout the school.

- A key feature of the outstanding teaching is skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding and to lead them rapidly to new learning. For example, children in the Nursery were challenged to explain which of their models of Big Ben were taller than others and which was the tallest. Pupils in Year 6 were asked to work out if all numbers ending in seven were prime numbers. The pupils with special educational needs were expected to apply their reasoning skills in identifying exceptions to rules. The most-able pupils were challenged to explain their problem solving in depth. Feedback on their work, in the form of questions, extended their thinking further. However, not all teachers in Key Stage 2 are checking and extending pupils' learning enough during lessons or providing helpful feedback on their work to promote rapid progress.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a flying start. Consequently, the proportion reaching a good level of development is much higher than the national average. This is because teachers make excellent use of assessment to plan activities to meet the learning needs of all the children.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1 and, in 2015, they all achieved an above average score in the check on phonics (the sounds that letters make). Achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 has risen over time and is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have identified that progress slows down at the start of Key Stage 2 where pupils are taught most of their lessons in mixed-age classes. To help teachers to build on pupils' different starting points in mathematics, the pupils are now taught the subject in smaller groups. In addition, gaps in their key skills, such as problem solving and spelling, have been identified and are being addressed in lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils catch up and make at least expected progress in all subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. They are supported very effectively by their 'learning journeys', which include targets that reflect high expectations and helpful strategies for teachers.
- The pupil premium is used very well to meet the learning needs of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making expected progress in reading and writing is above average. Their achievement overall is higher than that for other pupils nationally and other pupils in the school.
- The progress information for current pupils indicates that a higher proportion of the most-able pupils than previously are on track to make more than expected progress.
- The pupils are very eager to learn. They enjoy the exceptionally wide range of subjects and activities, including Spanish, visits, clubs and an increasing range of sports such as hockey and cross country. They also like the many opportunities to take responsibilities, for example through the school council, eco club and young enterprise club, and as food critics. Through participating in such activities, the pupils grow in self-esteem and confidence and they extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school

prepares the pupils thoroughly for life in modern Britain. They learn about democracy and the rule of law, and learn to respect and tolerate other views, faiths and cultures. Pupils behave very well and their attendance is above average.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that they learn how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet or social media. There have been a small number of bullying incidents in the school but they have been dealt with appropriately by the staff. Pupils are well supervised in the before- and after-school club, where they engage in activities that are effectively planned.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were positive about all aspects of the school and almost all would recommend it to others. Written comments were also positive. A very small minority of parents did not agree that they received valuable information about their child's progress. I looked at a sample of school reports and found that they reflect the assessment system which the school has recently developed. This needs further explanation for parents.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement and visit the school regularly. They monitor the progress made against the school improvement plan and hold leaders to account robustly for the standards that pupils reach. They also monitor the use of funding effectively, including the impact of the pupil premium and physical education and sport premium on the achievement of pupils. The employment of a sport apprentice has resulted in a high proportion of pupils participating in sport.
- The school draws on a wide range of external support, including support from the local authority in Plymouth in checking assessments in the early years and Key Stage 1 and support from the local authority in Devon for mathematics. The impact is evident in the improving trend in pupils' achievement.
- Staff in the early years provide courses for a local provider of initial teacher education. The school also works with other local schools in order to share good practice.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the proportion of outstanding teaching increases to secure rapid progress throughout the school, especially in Key Stage 2, by:
  - developing teachers' expertise in checking and extending pupils' understanding during lessons and in providing feedback on their work
  - sharing the best practice in the school
  - developing middle leaders' skills in observing lessons and providing support that is tailored to the needs of individual teachers.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, other leaders, members of the governing body, your previous school improvement partner and a group of pupils. I spoke to pupils around the school and examined the quality of their work, especially in English, mathematics and science.

I visited all classes with you, although we spent more time in Key Stage 2 than in other key stages. We discussed our joint observations of teaching, learning, pupils' attitudes and their progress. I also visited the childcare arrangements that are managed by the school.

I examined a range of documents, including your self-evaluation statement, school improvement plan and records relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and, in an anonymous form, the performance management of teachers. I took account of 61 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey. None of the staff or pupils completed questionnaires.