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Mrs Rebecca Dewing  
Headteacher  
Garrick Green Infant School  
Garrick Green  
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Dear Mrs Dewing

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

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 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 June 2011.

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

At Garrick Green Infant School you and the staff have created a joyful and welcoming place where pupils are keen to learn and do their best. Most parents agree that 'it is a brilliant school!' They say their children love coming to school. Pupils feel the same way about their school, 'The only bad thing is you can't sleep here!' The curriculum is exciting and interesting and pupils and parents alike are enthusiastic about the international weeks and sports weeks. There are many opportunities for even the youngest children to excel and develop new skills. For example you have a very creative approach to using the primary sports funding by making sure pupils have opportunities to take part in sports they would not usually do like archery, rock climbing and fencing.

Most parents find staff friendly and easy to approach and many describe the school as a nurturing and caring place for children to begin their education. All believe their children are safe at school. The overwhelming majority of responses, including text messages, posted on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents to express their views of the school) echo the many positive comments I received from parents during the inspection. Very few parents expressed concerns to me about their children's learning needs not being met and one did not like the new approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). These comments were carefully considered but I found no cause for concern.

Pupils say there is no bullying of any kind. Very occasionally there is fighting but adults sort this out immediately. Year 2 pupils take turns to help in the playground and make sure everyone has someone to play with. Pupils have a good understanding of how the behaviour policy works and like the rules.

You, the staff and the governors have worked exceptionally hard to make sure this stays a good school. The local authority told you that the school required improvement after your 2014 end-of-key-stage test results. You recognised that standards were slipping and you have turned this around. As a result, 2015 standards were higher particularly in phonics, mathematics and the number of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year. Pupils currently make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics and all are on track to do even better in 2016 with most reaching age-related expectations and a good proportion doing even better than this. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally has narrowed considerably. These pupils are also on track to achieve as well as other pupils of their age. You and the staff have successfully addressed the issues from the last inspection.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the governors make sure that pupils are safe at school. Parents recognise that you consider their children's welfare and safety to be of the highest priority. All required safeguarding procedures and processes are in place. The staff have an excellent understanding of how to deal with safeguarding issues because pupils' safety is the first item on the agenda at every staff meeting. You continue to deal with a number of very sensitive cases effectively and work well with children's social care. You and the staff value every child whatever their background and do your utmost to make sure they achieve their best in every way, during their time at school. All policies relating to safeguarding are comprehensive, up to date and on the website.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how the school makes sure they are safe: 'Our school is really safe because the rules keep you safe. There are always adults out on the playground and the gates are shut!' The curriculum helps all pupils understand what safety means. For example, children in the Reception class talked with great enthusiasm about how they are keeping their 'Bog Baby' safe from harm.

### **Inspection findings**

Eighteen months ago, the local authority judged that the school had lost its good status because standards had remained around average for three years. After the initial shock, you and the staff responded very positively to this. You work exceptionally well as a team and in doing so you have successfully dealt with the issues that were stopping pupils from doing better. You completely overhauled the

way phonics is taught across the school. The impact of this was much-improved results in the phonics check in 2015. You have worked with other schools locally to improve how you teach number work. This resulted in more pupils achieving the higher level three in 2015 end-of-key-stage tests. You are currently reviewing how you teach writing. As a result, the basic skills of letter formation and spelling start from Reception and teachers are clear about how they are building pupils' skills and understanding in each year group.

The governors have been instrumental in allocating additional resources to close the gaps in pupils' learning. They have made effective use of pupil premium funding (the additional funding allocated by the government for disadvantaged children and the children of service families). Your robust baseline assessments, carried out at the start of every year, quickly identify which pupils need extra help. You have excellent personal learning plans designed to meet pupils' individual needs and have made sure teaching assistants are trained to deliver these plans. You have employed a teaching assistant whose time is dedicated to improving pupils' language development from when they start school. All these interventions are having a positive impact on raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although this was clear from the scrutiny of pupils' work in writing and mathematics during the inspection, it took a while for teachers to find relevant pieces of work because pupils' work in folders is not organised systematically enough.

You and the governors hold teachers to account for how well pupils learn in every class. Pupil progress meetings have increased from one a term to at least one every half term. Teachers understand their responsibilities and take an active part in the meetings, coming up with ideas for how they will improve pupils' learning.

There have been a number of new governors since the last inspection. All have received good training from the local authority and as a result are clear about their role and responsibilities. They have a good understanding of pupil progress data and ask incisive questions to check that pupils are doing the best they can. They regularly visit the school to evaluate specific improvements you are making.

Attendance has improved since September and would be above average, but sadly a few pupils have had time off school through serious illness. Persistent absence has decreased dramatically thanks to the tough line you continue to take on this, strongly supported by the local authority.

You are clear about the next steps for improving the school but written improvement plans are not always precise or sharply focused.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the organisation of pupils' work in their folders is improved so that it readily shows the progress they make from their starting points in writing and mathematics
- improvement plans focus on key priorities for the year and have a manageable and achievable number of targets.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority. In addition, the teachers leading improvements in mathematics, parents and groups of pupils were also interviewed. A wide range of documentation, including information about pupil outcomes, was scrutinised. All teachers were observed teaching either phonics, writing or mathematics. Some creative and adult-supported activities were observed in the Reception classes. Pupils' books were scrutinised in lessons, and a sample in more detail with the teachers leading mathematics and with all staff for pupils' writing. The 23 responses to Parent View and additional text messages were analysed.