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31 March 2016

Nick White  
Rustington Community Primary School  
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Dear Mr White

### **Short inspection of Rustington Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2011.

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

Rustington is a friendly, happy school with what one parent described as 'a lovely feel'. I agree. You have built a cohesive, motivated, well-trained staff team who are proud to be members of the school community. You have maintained many of the strong qualities identified at the time of the inspection of your predecessor school. These strengths include pupils' behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning, above-average attainment and progress in English and mathematics, and strong partnerships with parents and other schools. All groups of pupils achieve particularly well during their time in Key Stage 2 so that, by the time they leave, their reading, writing and mathematics skills are well above average. The pupils enjoy a wide range of activities and also achieve well in subjects such as art, music and physical education. Achievement in the early years and in Key Stage 1 has been too low in the past but improved last year to be broadly average. However, there is more to do to continue this improvement and to raise expectations of how well and how much the younger pupils can achieve.

At the time of the inspection of your predecessor school, several areas for improvement were identified, including a cluster around the quality of teaching, such as increasing the pace of learning, improving questioning and taking assessment information into account when planning lessons. To a great extent these have been addressed successfully, although there is always more to be done especially around making sure the pace of learning is rapid enough in all classes and that there is enough challenge and opportunity for pupils to really stretch themselves.

The teachers are currently becoming confident in using the new assessment system. They are making good use of the school's system of tracking what is being covered week by week and pupils' grasp of key pieces of knowledge and skills. Teaching assistants work effectively with individuals, in class and with small groups. The role and influence of governors were also areas identified for improvement. The governance of the school has completely changed since the school converted to become an academy and joined the Schoolsworks Academy Trust. The different layers of governance work effectively to provide both challenge and support. There are intensive checks to make sure that the school is working well. Nonetheless, the views of governors and trust members as to how well the school is performing are slightly generous.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Parents and staff wholeheartedly agree that pupils are safe, happy and well looked after in school. These aspects were judged to be strengths in the previous inspection and this continues to be true. Pupils cooperate well and there is very little inappropriate behaviour. When it does happen, it is managed very well. Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result, attendance continues to be above average and very few pupils regularly take time off school.

There are three fully trained safeguarding leaders, and policies such as those for child protection, anti-bullying and e-safety are comprehensive and up to date. Systems for checking and recording to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children are meticulous and well managed. There are clear training and induction arrangements to ensure that all staff, including new staff, volunteers and trainee teachers, understand the school's systems, their responsibilities and what to do if they have any concerns about a child's safety or well-being. You showed me good evidence that these systems are routinely followed in practice. There is further training planned for later this year on aspects such as positive handling and preventing extremism. The deputy headteacher has introduced a very useful system to track vulnerable pupils. This enables you to identify quickly any trends, and it highlights more complex needs. There is effective governor involvement in annual safeguarding audits and health and safety reviews.

### **Inspection findings**

- Relationships are very positive and purposeful throughout the school and throughout the day. Pupils are attentive in lessons. They enjoy each other's company in lessons and at playtimes, and are positive about the school and want to do well.
- We particularly focused on writing during this visit. You and your writing leader changed the approach to the teaching of and learning in writing last year and we could see good evidence that these changes are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' written work.

- Teachers plan carefully to develop pupils' vocabulary, writing techniques and enjoyment. The pupils' books and pupils' writing displayed around the school show that many pupils are making rapid progress. This is most pleasing in the increasing complexity and effectiveness of older pupils' writing. There are also some obvious improvements in Year 2 and this shows that current Key Stage 1 pupils are on track to achieve better than in the past.
- There are interesting opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and in different subjects. The adults encourage the pupils to use the correct terminology in English and organise the classrooms so that there are visual reminders to support the learning. Pupils use charts to remind themselves what terms such as 'conjunction' and 'onomatopoeia' mean and use examples in their own writing. The teachers use high-quality children's literature to capture pupils' interest and to inspire their own writing.
- Teachers plan in year-group teams and this enables them to share ideas and expertise. They make good use of the skilled support staff who work effectively in whole classes, and with individuals and small groups. There is scope to introduce more challenge, and opportunities for pupils to really push themselves, make choices, take responsibility and really extend their own learning.
- Occasionally the atmosphere, especially in the younger classes, is a little too relaxed and although the pupils are engaged, the pace of learning becomes rather slow. Expectations about what the pupils can achieve are also a little low at times. For example, in several classes, there appears to be an expectation that one page is the norm for each lesson and very few pupils produce more than this. In some classes, adults sometimes try to include too many techniques in one lesson and this leaves the pupils less time to tell or write their stories.
- The pupils learn across a range of subjects. Throughout the school there are some lovely examples of art, for example the pop-art paintings based on a study of Lichtenstein and the sumptuous flowers in the style of Georgia O'Keeffe. Pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. In physical education, pupils are able to reflect on other pupils' dance sequences and use the correct terms to describe different effects such as mirroring and balance. The groaning trophy table attests to the school's participation and success in sporting endeavours.
- There have been significant changes in governance since the previous inspection with conversion to academy status. The academy trust provides a good level of scrutiny and challenge and the responsibilities of the board and local governing bodies are clear. The school works closely with the four other schools in the trust, sharing expertise, ideas and training.

- You and other leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and regularly gather a wide range of evidence to identify trends and highlight any concerns about individual, subject or group progress. However, the school self-evaluation document does not clearly reflect this and is rather over-generous and imprecise. Also, school improvement priorities are wide ranging rather than sharply focused on key aspects such as improving provision and attainment in the younger age groups. The reality is sharper than these documents would suggest and you are well aware of, and working to improve, the key priorities.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- improve outcomes in the early years and in Key Stage 1 by raising expectations and increasing the pace of learning
- provide greater challenge across the school and more opportunities for pupils to make choices, take the initiative and extend their own learning
- sharpen the focus of school improvement planning onto those aspects where the most rapid improvement is required.

I am copying this letter to the Executive Board, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for West Sussex County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the writing leader, the chief executive officer and the director of teaching and learning from Schoolsworks, the multi-academy trust, and the Chair of the Local Governing Body. We visited all of the classes during the day to observe the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in writing. We also looked at samples of books, including some from disadvantaged pupils. I took account of the 29 staff questionnaires and the 66 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day and also looked at the school's most recent parent survey. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about teaching, children's achievement, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I also looked at, and discussed with you, the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the current improvement plans.