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Mr Marc Goodliffe  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Goodliffe

### **Short inspection of Gresham Village School**

Following my visit to the school on 30 June 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 2011.

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

This small school maintains a strong sense of community where staff, pupils, parents and governors work together to create a harmonious and welcoming atmosphere. You lead by example, carrying a weighty teaching commitment but using this as an opportunity to model good practice. You have continued to lead the school well, improving the early years provision, which was an area identified in the previous inspection report. Most recently you have encouraged better parental links in the early years, and parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire praise the provision for the youngest children. You are not complacent and constantly look for areas where you think the school could be doing even better. One example of this is mathematics, where you and your team have ensured that teaching improves by giving pupils more opportunities to use practical resources and to solve problems. Consequently standards in mathematics have risen.

You and your governors are determined that pupils at the school enjoy an interesting, well-balanced and enjoyable curriculum. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said how much they enjoy the opportunities for outdoor learning, such as taking part in 'forest schools' and 'curriculum Fridays' when pupils study a range of subjects outdoors. You provide a range of sporting activities, dance and gymnastics in school and through after-school clubs. Learning is also enhanced by trips, and pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their trip to Derbyshire. However, despite this pupils are not achieving as well in all subjects as they are in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because teachers do not focus sufficiently on developing

pupils' skills in these subjects. For example, in science, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop an understanding of scientific concepts through regular investigations. In history, pupils learn historical facts but rarely consider how we find out about what happened in the past.

You want your pupils to be well-rounded individuals and you and your team provide good opportunities for pupils to become just that. You talk with them about current world events, for example the EU referendum, when pupils were given the opportunity to debate issues and hold their own referendum. Pupils are very aware of issues such as racism and demonstrate strong moral values which are reinforced by the school's welcoming ethos, through discussions and through assemblies. Pupils are well known by you and all staff, and feel valued as individuals. Pupils spoke about the good support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. They also said that teachers make learning fun. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were taking part in 'mathematics Olympics'. Pupils said this is typical of the lessons that teachers provide: 'we are learning, but having so much fun it doesn't feel like work'. Because they enjoy their lessons, pupils behave very well in lessons and also at playtimes; they respond eagerly to direction from adults and cooperate well together.

Governors are highly supportive of the school. They meet regularly and visit the school to see first-hand aspects of pupils' learning. These visits are linked to aspects of the school's development plan. For example, governors visited to see what changes had been made to the school's teaching of spelling and grammar. This gives them a good understanding of what is working well in the school. Governors discuss achievement regularly but have not checked closely enough on how well different groups of pupils are achieving across the school. As a result, they have not challenged you sufficiently about the impact of support in raising achievement for different groups such as disadvantaged pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupil safety and welfare is at the heart of this small school. All statutory checks are carried out on staff working at the school and staff receive regular safeguarding training and training about what to do if they have a concern about a child. For example, you recently provided training about radicalisation and the 'Prevent' duty. You maintain careful records for pupils with safeguarding concerns, and take action to follow up with external agencies when necessary. Because you know each pupil well, you are able to identify quickly any issues and concerns, and act on them swiftly so that pupils are kept safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and your team have taken effective action to improve the early years, which was identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection report. You have created an engaging environment indoors and outdoors with lots of interesting activities available for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. During the inspection, for example, children were

enthusiastically searching for treasure in the sandpit whilst others used musical instruments to create the sounds of a rainforest in the role play area. Adults support children well, asking pertinent questions to extend learning. For example, an adult asked children the names of fruits they would be using to make a fruit salad and then to describe the textures of the fruits, encouraging them to use a wider vocabulary. Children in the early years behave well and are friendly and sociable; they share resources and play together happily. You identified that some pupils were not achieving well enough in mathematics by the end of the Reception year, and have put in place effective strategies to improve this. As a result of the improvements made, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year has improved. However, opportunities for developing writing skills are not as plentiful, varied or well used as they could be. As a result, a small number of pupils are starting Year 1 with weaker skills in writing.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. You as leader for special educational needs ensure that pupils' needs are identified early on and support is provided within the school to meet these needs. You draw on outside agencies to ensure that specialist help is used where it is needed. You review the support provided regularly, changing provision when it is not helping pupils to move on in their learning. By carefully evaluating and modifying the support provided, you ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- You recognised that in the past the small number of pupils who are disadvantaged have not made rapid enough progress so that they achieve as well as others in the school. You have looked closely at how best to help these pupils further and have tracked their progress, modifying support over time. This has been mostly successful in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are making better progress. However, some of the support provided is still not specific enough for individual pupils, and so is not enabling them to catch up with others quickly enough.
- You and your team have put in place a range of changes to improve the achievement of boys in reading and writing, and in particular the proportion who achieve above the expected standard. You have chosen topics which boys will engage with more readily, and chosen books in English which will appeal to both boys and girls. This has been effective and evidence in pupils' books, as well as your assessment information, shows that boys are making good progress with more achieving above the standard expected for their age.
- You and your governors recognised that the attendance of some pupils was not good enough, and particularly of some girls and some disadvantaged pupils. You have tackled this effectively, meeting with parents to talk about the impact of absence on their child's learning. You also identify with parents any ways the school can help secure better attendance; for example you have introduced a breakfast and after-school club. This has ensured that attendance has improved and now matches the national average.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities for writing in the early years are improved so that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception continues to rise
- strategies for supporting disadvantaged pupils are more closely focused on each pupil's needs and governors provide greater challenge for leaders about the impact of support on achievement
- achievement in all subjects improves to the standard of reading, writing and mathematics, by extending opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in a range of contexts.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and your Reception teacher. I also met with three governors and with a small number of Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils. I scrutinised a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, school development planning and the school's self-evaluation. I observed teaching in all classes and evaluated pupils' work.