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Dear Mrs Alphey

Short inspection of Dunsford Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 September 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

You have ensured that this small primary school of three classes is central to the lives of the families in the local rural community. Families, staff and governors work together to provide a broad and memorable education for the pupils. The regular performances and concerts in which the pupils participate are valued by the whole school community. You and the governors have engaged parents successfully in defining a clear set of values that underpin the school's work and culture. These involve seeing worth in everyone, celebrating differences and supporting all to reach their potential.

The extensive curriculum is highly valued by parents and pupils. In addition to the range of arts and poetry competitions, a high proportion of pupils participate in the wide variety of sport and tournaments provided through the school sport partnership. A special feature is the use you make of the school's outdoor facilities, including the swimming pool, wild garden and forest school, to promote pupils' social, emotional and academic development. The curriculum is further enhanced by a range of trips, including a residential trip to London that involves a visit to a Hindu temple. Such visits help to promote pupils' understanding of the British values of democracy and tolerance of other faiths.

Subject leaders now have regular opportunities to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress throughout the school. They observe lessons, examine the work in pupils' books and

check pupils' progress information. However, their impact is not yet consistently strong across all subjects.

You and the subject leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching remains good and the 2016 progress information indicates that you have sustained pupils' good academic progress since the last inspection. Progress in reading is particularly strong and pupils attain above-average results in the Year 1 phonics check. You have reviewed successfully the books available for pupils to ensure that these engage boys in reading. Through dedicated time for reading in school and in homework, pupils are reading more regularly and widely. Pupils make good progress in mathematics because the level of challenge is matched well to their starting points. However, progress in writing continues to be a priority for improvement, especially for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as it is not as strong as in other subjects. Recent staff training is helping to address this. However, teachers' use of assessment is not precise enough to inform the next steps in learning in lessons and in feedback on pupils' work.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established a culture of vigilance with regard to safeguarding pupils. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All staff and governors have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of safeguarding requirements due to regular training, for example in safeguarding, safer recruitment and in preventing radicalisation and extremism. School policies and procedures are up to date and reviewed regularly. They are followed consistently by all staff. Appropriate action is taken to address any concerns, including working with external agencies. Issues are followed up robustly.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and parents and staff agree. Pupils learn how to stay safe, for example when using the internet. They say that incidents of bullying are rare. They are confident that staff would deal promptly with any concerns they may raise with them.

Inspection findings

- Your vision of a rich and inspiring curriculum and high expectations of pupils' learning is shared by governors, staff and parents. You continue to work hard to engage all parents in supporting their children's learning.
- Parents are exceptionally positive about the work of the school, especially the enriched curricular opportunities. All parents who responded to Ofsted's Parent View survey would recommend the school to others. Typical comments from parents include, '[my child] loves the small and inclusive feel of the school... she plays with older children which gives her confidence.'
- Staff are proud to work in the school. You support them very well with the systems that have been established, for example for managing their performance, planning lessons and for providing feedback on pupils' work. In particular, the system for tracking pupils' progress is helping teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning and appropriate support to help them to catch up.

- You provide clear direction for the staff through the school improvement plan and draw on a range of appropriate external support. For example, you use other schools to help develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of middle leaders. The impact is seen in the continuing improvement in the school, especially in reading.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years due to the strong provision. The above-average proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2014 has not been sustained in the past two years due to a higher proportion of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the small cohorts. Nonetheless, the school's progress information indicates that the children make rapid gains from their starting points.
- Throughout the school, the most able pupils exceed expectations of progress in reading. They read fluently with good expression and understanding, drawing on a range of strategies, including phonics, to make meaning. They make good progress in mathematics, applying their calculation skills in solving problems. They also make good progress in writing, especially in organising their work into paragraphs and writing more varied and interesting sentences.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils also read very fluently with good expression and understanding. They read widely and often. However, they are not making enough progress in writing, particularly in varying their use of vocabulary and sentence structure. They make better progress in mathematics because the level of challenge is matched well to their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in reading. They read fluently, drawing on a range of strategies, and talk enthusiastically about favourite authors. They also make good progress in mathematics as the work builds systematically on their previous learning. They make expected progress in writing, although weaknesses remain in spelling and vocabulary. They have too few opportunities to apply their writing skills across subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in developing reading strategies such as phonics to read and understand unfamiliar texts. They make expected progress in mathematics as the work is matched well to their needs and they are supported effectively by teaching assistants. However, they do not make expected progress in writing due to their limited vocabulary and spelling strategies. Their writing is not well structured or punctuated. Feedback on their work from teachers does not identify precisely what needs to be done next to improve their work.
- Pupils are eager to learn and attend school regularly. They are considerate towards others and work and play together well. Recent staff training has resulted in a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour. Support is also given to parents of children who have behavioural difficulties. The impact is seen in a reduction of incidents for these pupils. The school is calm and orderly and pupils behave well.
- Governors have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They gain this through regular visits, examination of pupils' progress information, evaluation of the school improvement plan and from your reports. This enables them to hold leaders to account for the school's performance and to ensure that resources such as the pupil premium have a good impact on pupils' progress. Governors support you well in your aspiration to improve the school further.

Next steps for the school

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that teachers' use of assessment identifies specifically, in lessons and in feedback on their work, the next steps in pupils' learning, especially in writing and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The specific areas of focus for the inspection were:

- what the school is doing to improve the attainment and progress of pupils in writing
- how well the quality of teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils, especially boys and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the impact of middle leaders in ensuring that all groups of pupils make equally good progress across subjects
- the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

The inspection activities to test out these aspects were:

- meetings with you, governors, middle leaders and some parents
- examining pupils' progress information
- hearing pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading, especially the most able, disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- examining the work of these pupils in their books from last year
- observing the pupils working in lessons
- observing pupils playing in the wild garden and forest area
- examining your school improvement plan and other documents, for example records relating to the safeguarding of pupils, their behaviour and attendance.

I took into account the 36 responses from parents to Ofsted's online Parent View survey, the 48 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.