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Mrs A Pratt
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Pratt

Short inspection of Orchard Lea Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 20 October 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your high standards, strong leadership and sharp focus on what could be even better have ensured that the school continues to meet pupils' needs well.

Parents appreciate how approachable and responsive the staff are. They particularly value how well you personally know them and their children. They comment that communication is effective and enables them to provide the right support for the school and their children.

The governing body recognises the impact of the effective leadership you provide and is extremely supportive of you. Governors sensibly look for ways to hold you to account, undertaking training to be able to do so. They carry out visits to see the school in action and, as a result, have a good understanding of the school's priorities.

Leaders and governors have effectively tackled the areas that were identified for improvement in the last report. The most able pupils do well in mathematics, because teachers' questioning is useful and helps to deepen pupils' understanding and thinking. The school's analysis of progress information is now easily accessible to leaders and managers, who use this information well. However, governors do not interrogate the information quite so sharply.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors do all they can to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff checks are carried out with rigour and the school closely adheres to local authority recommendations and guidance. Recording of these checks is meticulous. Governors and staff have undergone appropriate training for their roles and responsibilities.

Staff record any concerns appropriately and referrals to outside agencies are made when necessary. You and the governors carry out an annual audit to identify any aspects which could be improved further, and these are actioned quickly. Consequently, the school provides a safe environment for its pupils.

Inspection findings

- Since the last inspection, you have continued to drive improvements with rigour, determination and commitment. Governors and staff strongly support your vision for the school to provide the best possible educational experiences for your pupils.
- The school is a close community, where leaders, staff, governors and parents all work together to achieve the best for the pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of all that you and the staff do to care for and educate their children.
- Governors have a good understanding of their role and seek ways to hold you to account by asking challenging questions. However, they rely too much on headline information about pupils' achievement, without interrogating the progress of different groups, classes and subjects in sufficient depth.
- Leaders check teaching carefully to identify what could be even better. They provide useful feedback, so teachers know what they need to do to improve further. Staff are held effectively to account by rigorous targets, which link to pupils' progress. Consequently, all staff at the school know what they need to do for the school to become even better.
- The documentation to support leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness, and the action plans for school improvement, are rigorous. They sensibly link to pupils' progress so leaders and governors can check whether the changes they have made have been effective.
- Over a period of several years, pupils, including the most able, have achieved better in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils in other schools nationally. Although that was not the case this year under the new assessment requirements, pupils' work in books indicates that they are making good progress and working at the appropriate standard for their age, or better. Leaders' work to identify the exact causes of why pupils' outcomes were broadly in line with those of other schools this year is useful and leaders are taking the right actions to ensure that outcomes next year return to their usual high levels.

- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are supported effectively and make good progress. Pupils receive one-to-one teaching support to ensure that they are working at the same level as their peers. This has rightly been a focus for the school and has resulted in improvements in this area, so that these pupils now achieve broadly in line with the same group nationally. Leaders have sensibly taken action to increase the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, which was below that of other pupils. Through their interventions and individual support, attendance for this group is now marginally above average.
- Reading is taught effectively. Pupils read books at the right level for them and practise their skills working in groups, supported by an adult. However, pupils who do less well in learning phonics are less adept at decoding unfamiliar words once they are in Year 2. Over time, attainment in the Year 1 phonics check is generally in line with other schools across the country, which does not reflect the high results in other subjects.
- Children in the early years are supported very well before and when they arrive at the school. This year, children were given a teddy on one of their school visits, before they started. They each took their teddy with them on their summer holidays and brought them in on their first day of school, ready to share their bears' adventures. As well as the useful and enjoyable learning that this brought, children also knew what to expect and settled quickly. Home visits and sessions in school ensure that children are excited to start. Staff know their interests and concerns well, so they provide the right support. Two parents were quick to tell me about the way the specific needs of their children were identified and supported.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. The interesting and varied topics link usefully across subjects and are supported well by educational visits. Pupils learn appropriate skills in other subjects and have good opportunities to develop their writing for different purposes. An example of this was in Year 1, where pupils followed up their reading of 'Goldilocks' by thinking about how the different characters felt. They then created 'wanted' posters on behalf of the three bears and letters of apology from Goldilocks.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through assemblies, discussions in class and relevant activities. However, although teachers discuss British values, pupils are not clear about what these are or where they might see them in action. For example, when explaining how they became school council representatives, pupils said that the teacher had chosen them; they did not recognise that their peers had democratically voted for them.
- Pupils learn how to be healthy and to keep themselves safe. Pupils described the dangers of talking to strangers, using the internet and crossing the road. They also explained the benefits of exercise and the importance of not eating too many sugary or fattening foods.

- Pupils demonstrate care and respect for adults and their peers. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils listen attentively and are keen to learn. They have purposeful discussions about activities and remain on task for sustained periods of time. This is evident in the youngest classes through to Year 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors' interrogation of the achievement of groups of pupils, classes and subjects is sufficiently rigorous to hold leaders fully to account
- phonics teaching leads to attainment being consistently above that of other schools nationally
- pupils recognise British values in action.

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

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and together we visited each class, where I observed teaching, spoke to pupils and scrutinised work in pupils' books. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I spoke to a group of pupils from Year 2 and listened to some of them read. I gathered views from parents and grandparents through informal conversations before school in the playground and considered the 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also took account of staff views through the 24 online responses. I analysed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, and information about pupils' progress and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.

During this inspection, I particularly considered: how well the school keeps pupils safe and encourages good attendance; how well leaders support disadvantaged pupils, especially in reading; how well governors use leaders' analysis to check that the school is improving; and how well the most able pupils do.