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Ms Susan Papas
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Papas

Short inspection of Heavers Farm Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 November 2016 with David Lloyd, Ofsted Inspector, 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You sustain the momentum of school improvement by insisting that information about pupils' learning outcomes is well communicated among and effectively used by teachers.

Senior leaders have systematically tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection. You ensure that the teaching in key stage 1 leads to good progress for pupils, whatever their starting point or individual needs. As a result, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics exceeds national averages. Provisional information for 2016 indicates that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally in these subjects. The most able disadvantaged pupils all go on to attain at a higher level in reading and writing. A greater proportion than seen for other pupils nationally do so in mathematics.

You have made sure that reading is taught consistently well across the whole school. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen so that it now exceeds the national average. Disadvantaged pupils reach the standard in the same proportion as that seen for other pupils nationally. The pupils who read to me used their early reading skills to tackle unfamiliar words with confidence. The most able readers in Year 6 can explain their reading preferences and describe how they use non-fiction texts to help them complete research. Older pupils have noticed that you have introduced a better range of books and understand why you have done this.

Pupils make good progress in their writing from all starting points. You are confident enough in the consistency of teaching to have introduced creative revisions to the school's assessment policy. This is enabling teachers to adapt and refine lessons to suit the needs of individual pupils more effectively.

During the inspection we decided to consider outcomes for pupils across the wider curriculum as a key line of enquiry. We agreed that subjects are brought to life by stimulating topics which include thoughtfully chosen resources and experiences. The curriculum support pupils' learning well. It plays a positive part in ensuring that pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning consistently across the whole school. However, teachers do not use information to check on pupils' progress across a wide range of subjects as well as they do in reading, writing and mathematics.

Senior leaders are effective in ensuring that the school's behaviour policy is implemented with striking consistency. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very well managed in school. This enables pupils to feel safe and to concentrate on learning.

The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains above the national average. Senior leaders pursue the individual reasons for poor attendance tenaciously. However, you accept that improving attendance must remain a key priority for development.

Safeguarding is effective.

You make sure that the training provided for staff on safeguarding is relevant to the particular needs of your school community. This includes training about issues such as radicalisation and extremism. Your recruitment procedures ensure that new members of staff understand how to respond if they are concerned about a pupil's well-being. Your decisions to refer concerns to other services are well informed and carefully recorded.

Between senior leaders, staff and governors, there is a thorough understanding of particular risks which pupils may be affected by. You understand how some specific local risks predominate among the reasons why concerns are raised. However, more could be done to ensure that this knowledge is shared more coherently when reviewing and revising safeguarding policies.

Inspection findings

- Teachers use the wide range of information available about pupils' learning to plan interesting, challenging lessons in reading, writing and mathematics. They have a shared, common understanding of how to apply the school's behaviour policy so that lessons remain calm and purposeful.

- The range of lessons taught across a wide range of subjects is suitably broad and balanced. Pupils' science books, for example, show that they are challenged to draw conclusions from their practical investigations. However, pupils' work also demonstrates some variability in teachers' precision in using information to set work at an appropriate level of challenge across the curriculum as a whole.
- During our visit to classrooms in key stage 1, we saw teachers and additional adults using practical apparatus well to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support staff help these pupils understand the objective of the lesson with skill and sensitivity.
- Leaders responsible for monitoring attendance know a great deal about the reasons for individual pupils' absence. They keep extensive records of the work done to improve attendance of persistent absentees. This shows that the school follows up poor attendance with regularity and tenacity. However, when leaders decide on strategies to improve attendance further, they do not always analyse patterns or trends in absence information sharply enough.
- The pupils' work I looked at with your head of school demonstrates that teachers provide consistently helpful guidance to ensure that pupils improve their writing over time. This helps them learn how to use the features of different writing genres with increasing flair and confidence. Your plans for further improvement are suitably focused on ensuring that more disadvantaged pupils progress rapidly from average starting points to begin Year 3 working at a greater depth in writing.
- Your work to ensure a consistently good quality of teaching for reading is effective. Pupils of all abilities learn to enjoy reading and most, including the least able readers, make rapid progress. More than twice the national average proportion of pupils with average starting points went on to attain at greater depth by the end of key stage 1 in 2016. The proportion of the most able readers attaining at a high level by the end of key stage 2 was similar to national averages.
- Governors receive regular, detailed and wide-ranging information from you. They visit school with a well-defined purpose in mind to check on the impact senior leaders are having on standards. The information governors receive about the wider curriculum and patterns of attendance is, however, less extensive and incisive.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start in the school. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development increased in 2016, and is now well above the national average. Teachers provide interesting activities both indoors and outside. They guide children well to make the most of the resources available. Members of staff are quick to identify when children may need additional support to develop their speech and language.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- information about attendance is analysed sharply so effective action can be taken to further reduce rates of persistent absence
- teachers use information about pupils' outcomes across a wide range of subjects as effectively as they do in reading, writing and mathematics
- information about specific potential risks to pupils is shared coherently so it may be used even more effectively when reviewing safeguarding policy.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The HMI agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- The progress of pupils from different starting points in writing, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- How effectively teaching is sustaining the good progress of pupils in key stage 1 in the current school year.
- How well information about pupils' progress across a wide range of subjects is used by leaders and governors.
- How successful the school's work to improve pupils' attendance has been.
- The effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding.

The HMI carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- He held discussions with members of the senior leadership team and middle leaders.
- He spoke to representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- He visited lessons with senior leaders, sampling pupils' work and talking to pupils about their learning.

- He heard some pupils of different abilities read.
- He looked at a sample of pupils' work and scrutinised documents related to safeguarding and school improvement.
- He took into account responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, together with written submissions from parents.