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8 December 2016

Mrs Susan Pietrzak  
Headteacher  
Manor Field Infant School  
Haydn Road  
Brighton Hill  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
RG22 4DH

Dear Mrs Pietrzak

### **Short inspection of Manor Field Infant School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 November 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.**

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are passionate and ambitious for the children in your care. You have rightly challenged perceptions that the pupils the school serves cannot achieve as well as others. Staff and parents admire your openness and enthusiasm, as well as your drive to raise standards still further. Parents describe the school as 'fantastic' and state that you and your staff are 'committed to obtaining the best from every pupil'.

You have established a very effective leadership team, who have high expectations and model these in the classroom and in their work with staff. You and your leaders have put in place a range of strategies to improve teaching and taken difficult decisions when necessary, so that teaching across the school is now more effective.

You have established new partnerships with the local junior and pre-schools to improve the transition for pupils. As a result, you know the children well when they arrive and they make a strong start in key stage 2 when they leave the school. There are also useful links between local schools to support staff training and the moderation of pupils' work. The local authority adviser regularly visits to challenge you and your governors, especially over the progress of the most able pupils in the school. Consequently, pupils make more progress than before in their reading, in

early years and in mathematics. However, pupils in Year 2 have made less progress than you expected in writing.

Staff are positive about the school and enjoy working with you. The systems to reward performance are fair and include opportunities for further training and development. Staff know what is expected of them and feel strongly that they work well as a team. Staff value the way you communicate your high expectations and, as a result, staff work purposefully to achieve the high standards you set. However, a few staff are not as positive because they have not yet fully adapted to the new ways of working that you have introduced.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection effectively. In 2015, most-able pupils matched the national average for higher attainment in mathematics and writing, and exceeded the national average in reading. You have developed your curriculum extensively to broaden pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain and, as a result, pupils' topic books show an increased cultural awareness of diversity.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There are suitable systems in place to check on the recruitment of staff. Governors exercise useful oversight of school practices by regularly checking the work of leaders and the systems in use. Those staff with additional responsibilities are well trained and provide appropriate information and regular training to all staff in the school. Leaders work well with local agencies and are tenacious in ensuring that the best advice, care and guidance are available to children and their families. Leaders create a warm and positive climate so that all pupils, especially those who are vulnerable, are very well supported. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of parents reported that their children are safe and well cared for.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They have secure and thoughtful plans in place to address them. Leaders are also well aware that some areas, such as improving writing in Year 2, require urgent attention.
- You have established a clear framework for teachers to use to improve their teaching. You have also introduced a new approach to organising ability groups within the curriculum so that more pupils receive sharply targeted teaching that better matches their starting points.
- Governors are a strength of the school because they are knowledgeable about what issues remain for leaders to address. They have undertaken additional training to increase their capacity and improved how they scrutinise the work of leaders during school visits. They have a good overview of the effectiveness of additional funding and are asking more challenging questions more frequently than in the past.

- You and your leaders have developed your assessment system very effectively. You have accurate and useful information to hand to review how much progress pupils make. As a result, leaders are now making improved use of this information to plan additional intervention for pupils in key stage 1 who need support to catch up.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average in 2016. Pupils make especially good progress in reading because leaders have established successful school-wide systems to raise standards. Pupils read widely and often; they are well supported by parents who understand the importance of regular reading at home. Pupils enjoy reading and they are enthusiastic about the changes that you have made to the reading scheme because there are more challenging texts that excite and engage them.
- Fewer than you expected of the most able pupils exceeded standards in mathematics. However, leaders have worked hard to address this. The most able pupils are making better progress currently because you have redesigned the topics taught and resources used. Teachers use these new schemes well to develop pupils' reasoning, problem-solving and practical application of mathematics. However, these approaches are not yet as well embedded in Year 2.
- In 2016, pupils' attainment in writing was broadly in line with the national average. Evidence from books shows that all pupils are now frequently tackling more challenging work in their lessons as teachers grow in confidence in using the strategies you expect. However, pupils' books in Year 2 show that teachers are using too many different approaches that confuse the pupils. Consequently, these pupils make less progress than they could and this is especially the case for the most able.
- In 2015, disadvantaged pupils' achievement increased significantly by the end of key stage 1. Current information shows that this is still the case in Year 1 and in early years, with disadvantaged pupils doing as well as, if not better than, others. More disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in phonics in 2016 than in the past, and more of the most able disadvantaged pupils exceeded expected standards in reading by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making steady progress from their starting points. There are good systems in place to support them and all adults are effective in helping these pupils learn. However, a few pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in Year 2 need further support to improve their reading as they are not catching up quickly enough.
- The provision for children in the early years is increasingly strong. You have made changes to the early years classrooms to improve children's understanding of mathematics and, as a result, pupils are able to attempt more challenging work sooner. You have also updated the outdoor spaces so that

these engage and encourage children, especially boys, to explore number and shape more effectively. The new leader is using assessment well to identify those children who need extra help to catch up. Consequently, children in the Reception Year do well and achieve better than their peers in the past.

- Children enjoy learning in Reception. They listen attentively and are keen to try new activities out. They particularly enjoyed writing spells, such as 'smelly sock soup', and making words out of magnetic letters.
- In the past, disadvantaged pupils did not attend well. This is no longer the case as the attendance of all pupils, including the disadvantaged, is above the national average. Leaders and governors have worked well with the parent support worker to support families so that pupils arrive promptly and are ready for school.
- Pupils are smartly dressed, work well together and try their best. They are curious about the wider world, are keen to ask questions and share their ideas.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- further develop the school's approach to improve writing by focusing on those strategies that work most effectively so that more pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, achieve well at the end of key stage 1
- further refine the planning of mastery in mathematics so that more of the most able pupils exceed the expected standard by the end of Year 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Seamus Murphy  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

For this good inspection, I focused on the quality of safeguarding; actions taken since the previous inspection; the progress of disadvantaged pupils; the quality of teaching of reading, mathematics and writing; the progress of the most able and the impact of leadership in the school. I visited the school for one day. I met with you, your leaders, staff and governors, as well as with a representative of the local authority. Policies around safeguarding, your own analyses of pupils' achievement, your own staff survey and other documents were scrutinised. I visited all year

groups to see teaching and learning. There were informal meetings with pupils, as well as listening to Year 1 pupils read. I also looked at pupils' work in lessons with leaders, in particular writing books from Year 2. The 44 responses to Parent View were analysed and the views of parents who I spoke to informally at the end of the school day were also taken into account.