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Mrs S East
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs East

Short inspection of Springfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

School leaders and governors provide a good quality of education in the school. Since the last inspection there have been some changes in leadership. You took up your headship just over a year ago. Since that time you have successfully shared your vision for improving the school and inspired all staff to give their very best for all pupils. There is a strong commitment by everyone to continually improve the school and enable all pupils to achieve the very best they can.

Following a period of change and instability in staffing, you quickly put new systems in place to ensure that all staff have a shared understanding of assessing pupils' learning. You also made sure that performance management systems are aligned to the school improvement priorities and improving outcomes for pupils. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about your leadership and all who responded to the staff questionnaire say they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. They all say that you use professional development to encourage, support and challenge them to improve. Indeed, you take every opportunity to ensure that the strong skills of highly effective teachers are shared to strengthen the quality of teaching across the school. You have a clear focus on developing staff skills and increasing their capacity to lead improvements within the school. You are adept at identifying staff talent and encouraging staff to flourish. You have successfully addressed this area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Teachers are reflective and responsive to pupils' learning needs. Their school planning logs are a testament to their commitment to improve outcomes for pupils. They evaluate pupils' learning in

lessons effectively, record pupils' next steps and pinpoint the most important aspects of pupils' learning to address in subsequent lessons.

Governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school. They ensure that their skills which are required to challenge school leaders are utilised effectively. Through regular visits to the school during the school day, governors are able to check on the work of the school and hold school leaders to account. A recent governor day provided a good opportunity for governors to observe pupils' engagement and enjoyment in learning. As a result, they understand in greater depth the intervention work being put in place to make sure that pupils consolidate their learning and catch up.

Safeguarding is effective.

Parents and staff say that pupils are safe in school and pupils agree. They know that you and your staff do all you can to keep them safe. Pupils understand how to keep safe when using the internet. They know that if they have a problem in school, there is always someone who is there to help them and sort out any issues that arise. Staff, pupils and parents who completed the inspection questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive that the school deals effectively with any incidents of bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but know that staff are vigilant and will quickly resolve their concerns. The 'bully box' provides opportunities for pupils to raise concerns confidentially. They know that senior leaders check any issues that are raised and act swiftly to address anxieties.

Staff and governors know that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility. They receive appropriate, up-to-date training to help them to be watchful and keep pupils safe from harm. Pupils in need of protection are monitored carefully and outside agencies are used effectively to provide additional support when required. You and your senior leaders make effective decisions to use additional pupil premium funding, for example to provide breakfast club places for pupils whose attendance and punctuality are a cause for concern. This has successfully reduced persistent absence of some disadvantaged pupils and increased their opportunities to learn and make better progress.

Inspection findings

- You lead Springfield Primary with drive and determination. Your calm and supportive approach has restored staff confidence and raised expectations. Staff work effectively together. They know that you are considerate of their well-being. Morale is high. The new leadership structure provides opportunities for all members of the senior leadership team to contribute to improvements in their area of responsibility. You make sure that senior leaders are allocated leadership time to monitor teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes, which enables them to support their teams effectively.
- You are clear about the most important priorities for improvement for the school. The staff turbulence in 2015 resulted in a dip in performance. You quickly implemented effective assessment systems and reviewed the curriculum to

ensure that pupils engage in learning effectively. The enquiry-based approach to the curriculum interests and involves pupils in their learning well and develops their independence. You know that rates of progress for some groups of pupils are still not good enough. However, you have put effective systems in place to identify any underachievement and additional, tailored support for individuals and groups of pupils is provided to help them to catch up.

- Governors are fully committed to further improving the school. The recent reconstituting of the governing body and revised committee structure enable them to focus their questioning and challenge school leaders because their skills are being used effectively.
- Governors' understanding of pupil progress information has improved, because senior leaders provide more in-depth and detailed information about the performance of different groups of pupils. Governors are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and target the school finances to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know that teachers help them to make better progress in their learning through the comments they make in their work and by identifying the next steps they need to take to move their learning on even further. Pupils are positive about this feedback and know that it helps them to improve their learning.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The vast majority of parents agree that the school is well led and managed and their child is well taught at Springfield Primary School. They would recommend the school to other parents. All parents who responded to the online Parent View questionnaire said their child feels safe at school.
- Outcomes in the early years have improved overall. However, the achievement of boys is still lower than that of girls. At the end of July 2016 a higher proportion of boys were better prepared for Year 1 than in previous years. School leaders have implemented a more active style of learning, to meet the learning needs of children, particularly boys. For example, 'Monkey Do Mondays' involves exciting outdoor learning in the copse area. The early years leader knows that more opportunities for children to develop early reading and writing skills in all parts of the learning environment are vital to increase the proportions of children who are prepared well for learning in Year 1.
- Following the dip in attainment for Year 2 pupils in 2015, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2016 was above the national average.
- In July 2016 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average. However, the proportion of the most able pupils achieving higher standards was just below the national average for each subject.
- The programme in place to teach phonics systematically is supporting pupils to learn the sounds to build words. However, more needs to be done to ensure that pupils' early reading skills are developed more effectively to enable them to become fluent, competent readers and develop a love of reading. Although there

are few disadvantaged pupils, their achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check has not been as good as for other pupils.

- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not always make rapid progress. School leaders are considering new approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics to ensure that pupils develop a deeper understanding of the subject and achieve mastery standards. However, this is at an early stage of development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' phonic knowledge and early reading skills are developed more effectively to increase their ability to tackle unfamiliar words and increase their reading competence
- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged to ensure that they make rapid progress and gain a greater depth of understanding in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The key lines of enquiry identified in preparation for this inspection focused on:

- the effectiveness of the school in safeguarding children
- how well children are taught, particularly in writing
- the current rates of progress of all groups of pupils, particularly girls, lower achieving boys, the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils
- the quality of provision in the early years and how effectively the early years leader is improving outcomes for boys
- how ambitious school leaders, including governors, are and how effectively school leaders are held to account.

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, your senior leadership team, staff, pupils and seven governors. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited four classes with you and observed learning in the early years, including three phonics sessions with your deputy headteacher. I observed learning and reviewed pupils' written work. I looked at samples of children's

learning journeys. I took into consideration the views of pupils, staff and parents through written surveys. I had a discussion with eight pupils and considered the comments placed on the Parent View questionnaire by parents. I evaluated the accuracy of your self-evaluation as well as a range of other documentation. I checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements.