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31 January 2017

Mr Mark Ward and Mrs Jo Cottrell  
Head of School and Executive Headteacher  
Awbridge Primary School  
Danes Road  
Awbridge  
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SO51 0HL

Dear Mr Ward and Mrs Cottrell

### **Short inspection of Awbridge Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 2017, 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 February 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your senior leadership team and lead practitioner are all very ambitious for the pupils in your care and passionate to improve the quality of provision at Awbridge. Together you provide drive, vision and inspirational leadership which is recognised and highly valued by pupils, staff, parents and the local authority. Pupils and parents are rightly proud of the school and all that it achieves.

Awbridge is a small rural school which offers a nurturing and inclusive community atmosphere. From the Reception class onwards, the habits of good learning are established through your school's focus on developing key learning skills. You commissioned an artist to develop posters showing engaging squirrel cartoon characters exemplify these attributes in classrooms and around the corridors. Developing this shared language of skills development in school, coupled with a very effective praise and rewards system, has created an aspirational culture in which pupils are keen to excel. Pupils are articulate, confident and display very positive attitudes towards learning, their school and each other. They apply themselves diligently to the tasks they are given and take pride in making their work the best it can be.

During your last inspection, the inspector recognised the many strengths of your school including your inspirational leadership; the benefits of your federation and partnerships with other schools; and the extremely effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. These continue to be key strengths of the school. The inspector also identified a need to improve the progress that all pupils, particularly the most able, make in writing, and for teachers to share planning to make the learning activities more engaging. Leaders and governors have responded particularly well to these areas for improvement. Working to share teachers' planning, resources and training opportunities across your federation and partnerships with other schools has brought about improvements to the curriculum. In addition, you and other leaders check the quality of teaching regularly and have provided teachers with resources and training that have ensured pupils make strong progress in reading and writing.

Governors are a professional and dedicated team with a detailed understanding of the school. They are kept well informed through regular visits to the school and via leaders' accurate tracking and assessment information. Your school's self-evaluation and improvement planning is particularly strong, has clear targets and is appropriately focused. You have identified the correct priorities for further improvement and are taking the right actions to achieve them. You have prioritised raising standards in mathematics and are aware that there is more to be done to ensure greater consistency of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. While you have shared curriculum planning, there is more to do to ensure that pupils receive greater challenge in science and the wider curriculum. Although there have been improvements to overall attendance, some pupils' attendance needs to rise further.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, there is a culture of vigilance and records are well maintained, detailed and of high quality. There are clear, well-understood systems in place to manage safeguarding requirements. All staff have up-to-date training to an appropriate level so they know what to do should they be worried about a pupil. Governors are very knowledgeable about safeguarding and ensure that this aspect of staff's work is given high priority and meets current requirements. The school's website is professional, up to date, meets the government's requirements and contains useful information for parents relating to safeguarding and the promotion of equalities.

Pupils' attendance has improved and is now closer to the national average. You recognise that some groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged, had poor attendance rates in the past. The school has worked closely with outside agencies to support improvements. In addition, one member of staff has recently been trained to take the role of family support officer in order to raise attendance further.

Bullying and discrimination are rare. All staff and parents report that children feel safe and well looked after at Awbridge Primary School. Pupils know whom to go to should they have any concerns. As some of the pupils told me during this inspection, 'the best thing about our school are the sports, the trips and how we all work together' and 'we make good friends here'.

## **Inspection findings**

- During this visit, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision including:
  - the progress pupils make in Reception and Year 1
  - whether the dip in 2016 key stage 2 results is indicative of current pupils' progress in mathematics
  - the quality of learning in the wider curriculum
  - how effectively the school meets the needs of specific groups, including the most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have worked hard to reorganise and improve the quality of provision in the Reception class. As a result, the indoor and outdoor learning environments offer well-organised, rich and stimulating learning opportunities. Children gain confidence from their good relationships with staff and collaborative play with others in their class. They make good progress and develop communication, literacy and mathematical skills that prepare them well for key stage 1.
- The high-quality teaching of phonics underpins the good progress that pupils make in reading. Very high proportions of pupils achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 and all pupils have by the end of Year 2. In 2016, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were above average. The proportion of those working at a greater depth was in line with national figures.
- The majority of pupils, including the most able pupils, make good progress in reading and writing across all years within key stage 2. Leaders have responded well to the dip in pupils' achievement in mathematics last year. As a result of professional development for teachers and sharing of resources across the federation, the teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 is improving. Leaders are aware that there is still more to do to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged. This includes providing more frequent opportunities for reasoning and problem solving in mathematics.
- Leaders of English and mathematics work well with teachers to support their professional development and improve practice across the school. In addition, there is a rich assortment of sporting tournaments, clubs, trips and visits in each year group which are particularly valued by pupils and parents. However, pupils' books show that not all teachers' expectations are as consistently high in science

and the wider curriculum as they are in English and mathematics. Pupils, particularly the most able pupils in key stage 2, are not set sufficiently challenging tasks which require them to apply their writing skills in science and the humanities. Consequently, progress is not yet as strong across the curriculum as it is in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Leaders produce highly detailed plans and reviews of the quality of additional help for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support any pupils who are falling behind. Effective assessment and tracking systems, together with timely interventions and support, ensure that these pupils make strong progress in line with their peers.
- Historically, overall attendance has been below national figures. Leaders report that this is due in part to a few families taking holidays during term-time. Leaders have worked hard to promote the benefits of regular attendance and there are signs that it has recently improved. However, a small minority of disadvantaged pupils attend less regularly than other pupils. Leaders have instigated a range of activities to address this, including training a member of staff as a family support worker. There is still further work to do to ensure that the attendance of this group matches that of their peers.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- progress in mathematics continues to improve, particularly for the most able pupils
- the quality of pupils' work and the depth of learning in science and the wider curriculum is improved, by giving more challenging activities and further opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills
- attendance figures continue to improve, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you both, other leaders, teachers and members of the governing body, and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited all of the classes jointly with the head of school to look at teaching and learning. Together we looked at pupils' work in their exercise books. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and around the school and had a meeting with a small group of pupils. I took into account 17 responses to the staff survey and 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as speaking to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. I evaluated a range of documents, including pupils' progress information and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.