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Mr Adam Earle  
Headteacher  
West Hoathly C of E Primary School  
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West Hoathly  
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Dear Mr Earle

### **Short inspection of West Hoathly C of E Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 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.**

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You promote high aspirations for pupils which permeate the school. Your school is well respected for its contribution to strengthening writing moderation, and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the locality. Your staff value the many opportunities you provide for them to share ideas, learn from each other, and visit outstanding schools, so that they can strive for the very best. Teaching continues to improve across the school. As one parent commented, 'The school staff show great endeavour to do good for all pupils.' The vast majority of parents who spoke to me, or completed the Ofsted questionnaire, echo this sentiment.

This is a school where pupils are motivated to learn and they achieve well. They benefit from a varied and high-quality curriculum, which ensures that they thrive and make good progress. Pupils take great pride in their school and recall memorable experiences that have inspired them, such as a visit to the Museum of London. Leaders and teachers have embedded opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding and guide their exemplary conduct and appreciation of others. Tailored support for the most vulnerable pupils helps them to make a positive contribution so that those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as they can.

Leaders and governors have maintained the exemplary strengths found in the last

inspection. The school's inclusive climate ensures that pupils continue to demonstrate the values of 'love', 'hope' and 'forgiveness' in every aspect of their behaviour, so that they can make a positive contribution to their community.

At the last inspection, inspectors noted that you needed to improve teaching, in particular adults' questioning skills and pupils' involvement in assessment. You have been wholly successful in dealing with this. As we walked the school, pupils readily showed me what they were learning and why. They referred to the high-quality displays which help them to chart their class work, arising from a 'Big Question' to frame what they are learning about. Older pupils proofread their writing well. They appreciate resources, such as editing spectacles and special places to go and check their work. These, they say, help them to focus their attention without interruption. Other Year 6 pupils eagerly shared the amendments to their play scripts, talking about why the approaches they had used were effective.

Following the last inspection, you took effective action to quicken the progress of the most able pupils. As a result, increasing proportions of pupils exceed expectations at the end of the Reception class and in key stage 1, in particular in writing. Notably, provisional test results show that in 2016, pupils had made better progress than the national average in reading by the end of key stage 2.

During our discussions, you recognised that your new assessment system helps teachers to identify gaps in pupils' skills and to address them swiftly so that pupils catch up. However, your tracking and assessment information does not fully reflect the incisive information you get from looking at the work in pupils' books. Therefore, your current assessment information is not as accurate as you would wish it to be. It does not help you well enough to involve others in the analysis of pupils' progress. As a result, governors cannot interrogate your work as diligently as they do in other areas.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. Your culture of vigilance is tangible and you quickly pick up any possible welfare concerns. These instances are thankfully few, but when they do occur, you respond promptly and appropriately to seek the help that pupils and their families need. New staff receive a thorough induction and therefore understand statutory guidance and school policies to keep pupils safe and to report appropriately.

In the past, some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not attended well enough. You have taken effective action to monitor the attendance of pupils and you work well to support families to improve this. For example, we reviewed the support for the children who have reoccurring medical absence and need greater support, in particular those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. We agreed that your actions were reducing further absences.

Strong relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils are confident that any concerns that they have will be followed up rapidly and sorted out. They consider it important to help others out when they struggle, and the promotion of golden rules cements this ethos throughout the school. The curriculum is effective in promoting safety online and pupils have an excellent understanding of associated risks, including the sharing of personal information.

## **Inspection findings**

- Outcomes in the early years have improved since the last inspection. We agreed to check on how well you were building on these successes. More children now exceed expected outcomes in speaking for example, and use of their imagination so that they can create and express their ideas. Children apply their secure knowledge of letters and sounds to spell words so that they quickly start to write with meaning. They respond confidently to a range of high-quality motivating opportunities to write, such as through superhero characters. Boys enthusiastically wear their tool bags and chatter about the grip challenge! Adults guide pupils sensitively to develop their physical co-ordination so that they can scale down their large movements to the refined control required to form letters.
- Your high expectations have led you to identify correctly that children are not attaining as well in their understanding of the wider world and the lives of people and communities beyond their locality as they do in other areas such as reading. Motivating story texts, alongside role-play areas, such as travel agents, are encouraging children to think about experiences beyond what they already know. This gives them further opportunities to write for a purpose.
- Most pupils make good progress throughout key stage 1 from their starting points, and more pupils are reaching greater depth in writing because of improved teaching. We observed how Year 2 pupils applied their knowledge of suffixes to root words to explore comparatives so that they confidently learn spelling rules. We also agreed that the quality of writing, celebrated in the Razzle Dazzle display for writing achievement, reflected the improving standards across the school.
- You reported that key stage 2 pupils' application of punctuation, grammar and spelling in 2016 was frustratingly not as accurate in the test, as in their work over time. We confirmed that work in current books shows that pupils are making good progress in using technical skills to refine their writing. We observed pupils learning to create suspense and interrogated the standards of a range of writing on display that included word-processed newspaper reports and poetry. When we reviewed work, we concluded that your actions are ensuring that more pupils are on track this year to reach the highest standards than last year.
- We agreed to explore why too few pupils, including those that were middle attaining, reached the expected standard in mathematics in 2016. You recognised correctly that one of the factors in their unexpected performance was pupils' ability to convey their mathematical understanding in a test situation. You are providing pupils with support to overcome this. For example, you have worked with pupils to ensure that they are more resilient, which pupils appreciate. Pupils compare their written methods in mathematics so that they are more confident

about the most successful approach to take. For example, work on the Top Tips display in one class guides pupils well.

- I was confident from the mathematics work I saw in classrooms and in books that pupils are being taught well to develop their reasoning skills and to apply these alongside problem-solving skills. You have used your assessment information to inform modifications to your curriculum in order to prioritise the teaching of place value. This has ensured that pupils have more opportunities to apply these skills earlier in the year to strengthen their calculations. Pupils are appreciative of the concrete mathematical resources you have provided to guide them well. Displays show pupils rehearsing fluency in their recall of multiplication tables. As a result, they are solving calculations more quickly to prepare them for timed tests.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new assessment and tracking systems are embedded so that everyone has a clearer view of how pupils are progressing throughout the year, towards the high expectation the school has of them.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Aspland  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and together we visited each class, where I observed teaching, spoke with pupils, listened to them read and scrutinised work in pupils' books. I also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, staff, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I spoke with a group of key stage 2 pupils. The 46 responses to Parent View were scrutinised, as well as the views of parents with whom I spoke informally at the beginning of the school day. I also took account of staff views through the five online responses. I analysed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans. I checked information about pupils' achievement, including the different groups of pupils represented in the school. There were too few disadvantaged pupils in the school to report on in this letter. I took into account external evaluations of aspects of the school's work, including those from the local authority and diocese.