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Mr David Metcalfe  
Headteacher  
Capel-le-Ferne Primary School  
Capel Street  
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Kent  
CT18 7HB

Dear Mr Metcalfe

### **Short inspection of Capel-le-Ferne Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 October 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There has been a degree of turbulence in staffing and leadership in recent years. Last year, the leadership capacity was strengthened with the appointment of a deputy headteacher and an additional educational needs coordinator. With these senior leaders, you now form a strong team. You have been able to focus more rigorously on improving the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make strong progress, particularly in key stage 2. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully and make sure that any additional help needed is provided quickly.

You and all the staff know the pupils well. It is a caring and friendly school where pupils behave well and enjoy all that they do. Pupils say that teachers make learning fun and particularly enjoy the wide range of extra activities available to them.

Typically, parents have high praise for the school's strong leadership and the quality of care their children receive. One parent commented, 'It's a very nurturing and caring school. Relationships between the staff and parents are excellent. The headteacher in particular is very approachable and knows the name of every child.' Another wrote, 'All staff are very caring and have a friendly attitude. The headteacher shows strong leadership skills and has high expectations from both his staff and pupils.'

The inspectors at the previous inspection highlighted strengths which included: the progress children make in the early years; pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes; pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and the interesting and engaging curriculum. These aspects remain strong.

You have worked successfully to tackle the issues identified as needing improvement from the last inspection. Achievement in writing has improved. You have welcomed the greater level of challenge from the governing body. Governors now have a firm grip on pupils' progress information, which enables them to ask probing questions about the progress of different groups of pupils. You agreed that this improvement, along with the support provided by governors, has helped to further raise expectations and outcomes for all pupils.

You and the staff work productively in partnership with eight other schools and with local authority advisers. You have, as a result of your accurate evaluations of strengths and weaknesses, an incisive school improvement plan with clear, measurable targets. This shows that you are sharply aware of the need to continue your focus on reading and ensure that progress accelerates further for pupils in key stage 2.

Governors have every confidence in your leadership of the school and share your ambition and determination to provide the best for the pupils. You and the governing body are also acutely aware of the need to sustain a strong leadership team to ensure that the current capacity for further improvement is maintained.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils said they feel safe, happy and well looked after in school. All of the required checks are made on the suitability of adults to work in the school and are recorded carefully on the single central register.

You and your deputy headteacher have undertaken the appropriate training for designated safeguarding leaders. The rest of the staff, including governors, are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and know they are all responsible for pupils' welfare and safety. All of your policies relating to safeguarding are up to date and you have recently strengthened the procedures for staff to raise any concerns. There are effective links with parents and outside agencies as necessary so that pupils receive timely and appropriate support when required. There is a culture of safeguarding embedded in the school. As one parent commented, 'The staff conduct themselves in a professional manner with great nurturing qualities to make the children feel safe, valued and confident in making great achievements.'

The very large majority of parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, and the parents I spoke to at the start of the day agreed that the school keeps their children safe. A few parents expressed concerns regarding the access to the Nursery, which is on the school site but managed by a private provider.

You and all of the staff are extremely vigilant in the supervision of this access point to ensure pupils' safety.

### **Inspection findings**

- I focused, in particular, on the following aspects during the inspection: the progress pupils make across key stage 2; how well reading is taught across the school; how well governors challenge leaders; and the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Children get a good grounding in their early reading skills in the early years. From skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age when they start in the Reception Year, they make good progress. The proportion of children that reached the expected standard in reading by the end of the Reception Year was considerably above that found nationally.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress in reading in key stage 1. In Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics check has risen over the past three years and is above the national figure. This is a result of the in-depth research you conducted, and training that you initiated, to ensure that the teaching of phonics is of the very best quality. The impact on pupils' achievement is evident. By the end of Year 2 in 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected attainment for their age and the proportion that achieved greater depth in reading were above national figures. Pupils currently in Year 1 and Year 2 are making strong progress. They demonstrate good reading skills and the ability to use their phonics skills well to help them read and write.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2016, too few pupils had made the expected progress in reading, particularly some of those pupils who were most-able. This was not typical of previous years and was disappointing for you.
- You, governors and senior leaders took this very seriously and rapidly established the necessary actions for leaders and staff to take, including high-quality training. The success of your actions is evident in the progress of pupils currently in key stage 2. A large majority of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making progress in reading more rapidly than expected. Pupils' achievement in reading has clearly improved. You acknowledge, however, that there is greater scope to promote pupils' enjoyment and their motivation to read more widely in all year groups.
- Although pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2016 was above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, overall progress was not as strong as in previous years. This was particularly the case for some of the most able pupils. This group were achieving more highly than expected in class but found the tests much more challenging, particularly in reading. You and your senior leaders are ensuring that this is not the case for pupils currently in Year 6. From your monitoring, you have identified that teachers should provide greater opportunities for pupils in key stage 2 to excel and make the best possible progress.

- Governance is strong. Governors work well with you to drive school improvement. The chair and vice-chair of governors described how the governing body has been restructured since the last inspection. Now it provides an informed and rigorous level of challenge, as well as support for leaders, through its strategic work. Governors have undertaken training to ensure that they accurately evaluate the school's progress information. They now hold you and other leaders to account for the school's performance and provide you with challenging targets. They know the school extremely well from information provided by you, and through their own monitoring visits that are closely linked to school development priorities.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' enjoyment and motivation to read more widely are consistently promoted throughout the school
- plans to give pupils in key stage 2 more opportunities to excel result in pupils making accelerated progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the leaders for English and mathematics, the chair and the vice-chair of governors and an improvement adviser from the local authority. You accompanied me on most of my visits to all of the classes. During these visits, I looked at pupils' work in their books and talked to them about their learning. I listened to some pupils read and talked to them about reading. I spoke with some parents at the start of the school day and took account of 31 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 22 written comments. I also received one letter from a parent. I sampled a range of documents and records including: information about pupils' progress; leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning; the school improvement plan; and documents relating to safeguarding. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.