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Tracy Ball
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Dear Mrs Ball

Short inspection of Pippins School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection

You have established a strong leadership team that is ambitious and has high expectations for all staff and pupils. You are supported by an effective governing body that shares your aspirations. You have a very clear understanding of what the school does well and you are taking effective steps to address what needs to be improved further. Leaders' roles and responsibilities are well defined, thus enabling them to take an effective role in leading their particular area of expertise.

Together with key leaders and governors, you have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. You have introduced topics or themes that are of interest to all pupils and this inspires them to write confidently and independently. Pupils across the school make good progress in writing. You are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that the new curriculum for mathematics is fully embedded to accelerate pupils' progress in this subject. You also recognise that, when leaders check teachers' work, they need to look at how well they strengthen pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

As a leadership team, you provide good support to teachers and encourage them to try out new ideas and to share the best practice that exists. Staff know their pupils

and they plan lessons that are imaginative and help pupils to learn well. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils debated whether or not the remains of the Titanic should be salvaged and put on display. This generated some lively discussion, as well as enabling pupils to consider the moral issue of such action. This contributed very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Inclusion is a real strength of the school. Pupils say that everyone is welcome, regardless of background, and this is down to the culture and ethos you have created. Parents I spoke to commented on the family atmosphere and that everyone belongs here. Relationships between adults and pupils are respectful and, consequently, pupils are enthusiastic learners who want to do well. Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They attend regularly and work hard in lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' safety, care and welfare are fundamental to the school's work. There is a strong culture of safety within school so that all adults understand their moral as well as professional responsibility for keeping pupils safe. Leaders work closely with families to provide support for those pupils and families whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable.

School leaders provide high-quality training for staff and provide them with written information, as well as the child protection policy to help them understand the practical aspects of keeping children safe. At the time of this short inspection, there were three members of staff who joined the school very recently who were about to receive their formal training.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The child protection policy is up to date and has helpful guidance and information. This helps staff to understand exactly what to do should a concern about a child be raised. All adults who visit the school are carefully checked and leaders apply rigorous procedures when recruiting new staff.

Inspection findings

- The main areas of focus for this inspection were how well the new leadership team has maintained the quality of education since the previous inspection and whether or not pupils were making good progress, especially at key stage 1. I considered how effective teaching is and examined boys' outcomes in writing across the school. I also looked at the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have high aspirations and share a determination that every pupil should learn and flourish, both academically and personally. To this end, leaders have built teachers' skills and confidence so that teachers try new ideas and provide rich learning experiences that help pupils to achieve well.
- Leaders visit classrooms regularly, providing feedback to teachers to help them to improve their practice. However, notes from these observations show that some leaders focus on what the teacher is doing and not how well pupils are

learning. Leaders' feedback does not always consider the factors that hold back learning, including whether or not activities present the right level of challenge.

- Pupils currently in the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Children in the early years get off to a good start and make good progress from their starting points, particularly in reading and writing. This is because staff have established rich and stimulating environments which inspire children to learn. For example, the Reception class teacher created a scenario in which a dinosaur had destroyed part of the classroom overnight. Children then set about finding clues, including footprints and dinosaur eggs, to track the creature down. This generated much enthusiasm and encouraged children, especially boys, to produce some good-quality writing about the dinosaur.
- Teaching across the school is effective. Most teachers have embraced the challenges of the new curriculum and are providing activities that enable all groups of pupils to progress well. Pupils build on these skills in Year 1 and continue to make good progress.
- Teachers have established good working relationships with pupils and this inspires pupils to work hard. Teaching assistants offer pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities good support so that they make similar progress to other pupils. Teaching is less effective in those classes where teachers provide pupils with work that is at too low a level. This is particularly the case in some classes where teachers do not yet have a secure understanding of the new curriculum, particularly in mathematics.
- School leaders have taken action to improve boys' writing skills. They have introduced topics that engage boys' interest. For example, in Year 5, pupils have been studying poems written by war poets as part of their study of the first world war. This stimulated boys to produce some very thoughtful writing which, in turn, made a valuable contribution to the promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, boys' outcomes in writing are improving rapidly.
- Pupils' attendance is good overall. School leaders have worked closely with parents to help them understand the value of good attendance. Consequently, all groups of pupils attend school regularly and few are late for school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new curriculum for mathematics is fully embedded in all classes so that work in each year group builds progressively on what pupils already know and can do
- they focus specifically on how effectively teaching develops pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding when they observe in lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited 10 classrooms with you and your assistant headteachers to look at pupils' learning. I spoke with pupils about the school and I looked at work in their books. I met with you and your senior leadership team and three governors. I also met with an adviser from the local authority. I reviewed the school's website and your self-evaluation and development plans. I met with parents at the start of the day and considered the 10 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I checked the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including training and the school's record of recruitment checks.