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Mr John Lynch  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Lynch

### **Short inspection of Grundisburgh Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 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 March 2012.

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

Working closely with your leadership team you have maintained and developed the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have sustained the warm and positive ethos of the school and built on the outstanding behaviour seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to, and enjoyment of, learning are stronger and they thrive as learners. In all classes, pupils focus on their work and are keen to do well. This is reflected in the quality of work in most pupils' books. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds readily discuss their ideas with each other. The knowledgeable and confident way in which pupils talk about their work and their understanding of the purpose of their learning is impressive. Since the previous inspection, you have developed the curriculum further. Teachers and pupils are very enthusiastic about using a chosen text as the core focus for learning because through this approach different subjects are brought to life and meaningfully linked. Pupils say that learning is fun, and activities are exciting and engaging. This is reflected in the vibrant and high-quality displays around the school, which include a range of three-dimensional models and good-quality art work.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. They enjoy well-planned activities which engage their curiosity and interest so they become absorbed in their work. Focused teaching ensures that they quickly acquire the key skills they need to make good progress. The outdoor area is very well developed and used to promote

learning effectively. The focus given to involving boys in exciting opportunities to write is proving to be successful.

Tracking of pupils' progress is much better and leaders check the quality of teaching increasingly effectively. Pupils, staff, parents and governors value greatly the leadership qualities you bring to your role. You have a clear vision and passion for the education of pupils and are determined that this involves developing the whole child. Parents recognise and appreciate this. As a leader, you are thoughtful and reflective, and open to new ideas. In practice, this means that you develop new initiatives and actions to improve the school carefully and systematically so that provision continually improves.

The school, under your leadership, is already taking action to address the lower performance in reading at the end of key stage 2 last year and to deepen pupils' understanding of mathematics. You are aware that there is more to do in both of these aspects of the school's work. You have recently strengthened the leadership capacity by appointing an assistant headteacher to continue to improve assessment and marking. Your new leadership team is establishing well. However, members of the team are at early stages of gathering some of the information they need to enable them have a sufficiently detailed overview of the school's performance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Pupils say they feel safe at school and their parents agree. Staff are vigilant in their care of pupils and trained well to spot any concerns quickly. Procedures to keep children safe and to check that all adults are suitable to work at the school are robust. You are quick to provide extra support for pupils and, if necessary, their families when they need it. Records of concerns about pupils are thorough and followed up diligently. Analysis of accidents and incidents of poor behaviour show the same careful consideration as other aspects of your work. For example, the same careful attention is given to supporting all pupils involved when incidents of poor behaviour are managed.

### **Inspection findings**

- I identified a number of issues to explore with you. These included how much the school has improved since the last inspection.
- The first area of focus was on the quality of reading because pupils did not achieve as well in reading as in other subjects in 2016. You had already identified that this was because pupils' comprehension skills were not strong enough. Since September, parents have readily responded to your requests for greater involvement in their children's reading at home. Pupils are also making a greater commitment to read outside of lessons. Leaders have ensured that teachers have improved guided reading sessions so that the focus on understanding texts, given in these, is more effective.
- Pupils in key stage 2 classes now regularly practise comprehension exercises. As a result, they are getting better at explaining the characters and plots in the

books they read. Teachers ensure that pupils are reading books that are at the right level of interest and challenge for them, including the books they take home to read.

- We agreed that there is more work to be done to help pupils sharpen their ability to analyse the texts they are reading. Their understanding of reading between the lines (inference and deduction) remains less strong than other aspects, such as acquiring and using new and more complex vocabulary.
- How well the school uses its pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils was the next area of focus for the inspection. You concentrate well on identifying and supporting the needs of individual disadvantaged pupils, which enables most to make good progress. However, some differences remain in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Comparatively few disadvantaged pupils reach higher standards in their work by the end of key stage 2.
- The school's evaluation of the use of pupil premium funding does not provide enough information, for governors particularly, to understand the barriers to better attainment and how successful funding has been in removing these. Nor is funding specifically used to target the most able disadvantaged pupils. The new leadership team is already starting to analyse this information more carefully to ensure that the full impact of the funding can be realised.
- The third area of focus for the inspection was to check the extent to which the most able pupils are challenged in mathematics. In most classes, teachers give these pupils work that stretches them. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also work with a specialist to improve their understanding of higher-level mathematics. The most able, and indeed others, are developing good skills, and speed, in solving routine problems.
- You and your mathematics leader had identified that teachers were not giving pupils more complicated problems which require them, for example, to make their own decisions about the methods they will use. Pupils' books show that, while improving, there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge to situations that require greater depth of thinking and exploration.
- The final area for consideration during the inspection was the low attendance of some groups of pupils. Most pupils have good attendance. Some with medical conditions have to take time out due to illness. A few parents still take their children on holiday during term time although you actively discourage it by meeting with parents to explain the potential impact on their children's education. You have stringent procedures in place to follow up on absences, particularly for individual pupils whose attendance is low, and you are proactive and persistent in your approach. Information for the current year shows an improving picture of overall attendance and a reduction in the number of pupils who have high levels of absence for avoidable reasons.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to build on the work to improve pupils' skills of inference and deduction in key stage 2 so that more pupils achieve the higher standard by the end of key stage 2
- pupils have sufficient opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve more complicated problems
- senior leaders evaluate the pupil premium funding more effectively and target some of the funding to enable more disadvantaged pupils to attain high standards by the end of key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you to discuss progress since the previous inspection. I held meetings with your assistant headteacher and special educational needs coordinator as well as with middle leaders who have responsibility for leading English and mathematics. This enabled me to discuss their roles and how their work impacts on the outcomes for pupils. In addition, I met with a group of governors including the chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and a group of pupils from key stage 2.

As part of the inspection, I looked at a variety of documents and records including your self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, records of monitoring and evaluation and the school's assessment information. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance. We undertook observations together of learning across the school, viewed work in pupils' books, and spoke with pupils about their learning. During lunchtime, I dropped in to see the reading club. Finally, I spoke to a number of parents as they dropped their children off at school and looked at the responses of 55 parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View.