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16 March 2017

Mr Peter Mansfield  
Headteacher  
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Nottinghamshire  
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Dear Mr Mansfield

### **Short inspection of High Oakham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 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 November 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your capable and skilled leadership, pupils have continued to make good progress and they attain standards which match national averages and are sometimes higher. You have dedicated leaders and a team of committed staff who share your ambition and drive to achieve high standards across the school.

You have meticulously analysed pupils' outcomes and measured them against published performance information and you are clear about the school's strengths and where further improvements are required. Your school improvement plan is comprehensive and includes a well-considered set of actions that you will undertake to achieve your objectives. Clear deadlines are in place and success criteria are linked to the outcomes pupils will achieve.

The governing body is a highly skilled and knowledgeable group of individuals who have high aspirations for the school. They have the skills necessary to hold leaders to account and work hard to ensure that good outcomes for pupils are maintained.

Pupils in the school are extremely polite and friendly. They listen respectfully to adults, follow school rules and work well together. Pupils who I spoke with were articulate and confident. They told me how proud they are to be part of the school. Parents and staff express high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's work.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations and teaching routinely includes high-quality questioning which is used to make pupils think harder and ensure that they understand the concepts and skills they are learning. Work is pitched at appropriate levels to move pupils on from their different starting points, although occasionally it is not provided in a timely manner. Pupils are actively engaged in their learning and are keen to do their best. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary.

You acknowledge that there is still work to be done and agree that the school is not yet outstanding. You recognise that progress in key stage 2 mathematics has been less rapid than it should be and you have put strategies in place to improve this. Indications are that the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics has accelerated this year. Furthermore, you acknowledge that the rate of progress made by disadvantaged pupils has been less rapid than for other pupils in the school and you have increased leadership in this area to bring about the improvements required.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is given the highest priority at High Oakham Primary School and it continues to be effective. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are overseen by a governor who is experienced and knowledgeable. The staff are kept up to date about safeguarding matters through a training programme and regular briefings. Staff understand how to keep children safe and are confident in the actions they take.

The headteacher, as the designated teacher for child protection and safeguarding, has ensured that the administration of safeguarding and safety-related matters is of a high quality. Referrals are made in a timely manner and concerns followed up appropriately. Effective liaison with external agencies helps to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils are provided with the appropriate support they need.

Learning opportunities provided through the school's curriculum help pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Pupils told me that they feel safe at the school. They also told me that bullying and racism did not occur. These views are shared by the parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).

### **Inspection findings**

- Over the last two years, while attainment in mathematics at key stage 2 has been broadly average, the rate of progress made by pupils has been less rapid. Leaders have taken action to remedy this. A new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been introduced. All staff are committed to the new programmes and the quality of teaching has been improved.
- The school's tracking system for measuring the progress and attainment of its pupils has been recalibrated. It now provides leaders with a more accurate picture of the standards pupils are achieving. Information from this system is

indicating that the number of key stage 2 pupils currently in the school who are at expected levels and above in mathematics is above the national average and that their rate of progress has accelerated.

- While disadvantaged pupils have continued to make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and a range of other subjects, the progress that they have made has been less rapid than that of other pupils in the school. Leaders have strengthened the provision for disadvantaged pupils and stepped-up the checks that they make on the progress pupils make. The disadvantaged pupils I spoke with during the inspection told me that they feel well supported at school and that they enjoy learning because teachers explain things well, that they are challenged to work hard and that lessons are fun. The school's performance information indicates that disadvantaged pupils are now keeping up with other pupils in the school. However, it is early days for many of the approaches which have been introduced and the impact of the different methods being used has yet to be assessed by leaders to determine whether the accelerated progress made by pupils can be maintained.
- All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, benefit from a well-balanced and varied curriculum. This is designed to ensure that pupils are able to learn about, and make progress in, a range of different subjects. The workbooks which I looked at during the inspection, across a range of different subjects, showed that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. Their work was neat and presented with care. The disadvantaged pupils who I listened to reading did so with confidence and fluency. They demonstrated good comprehension skills and were being appropriately challenged by the books they were enjoying reading.
- Overall, pupils' rates of attendance are high. However, this is not the case for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have taken action to reduce the number of absences for disadvantaged pupils and some individual successes have been achieved. This has led to a small reduction in the number of absences for disadvantaged pupils but there is work to be done to reduce this further.
- The attainment of pupils by the end of key stage 1 was broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. However, middle-ability boys did not attain as well as they should. Leaders have put in place effective measures to help this group of pupils improve. Adults use questioning to good effect to check on pupils' understanding and help them think more deeply about their learning. They use assessment information effectively to provide targeted support and develop specific skills which have not been fully grasped. This has led to pupils currently in the school being better placed to achieve higher standards. The school's performance information for current Year 2 pupils indicates that middle-ability boys are attaining higher than middle-ability boys nationally in most areas. This higher standard of attainment was also evidenced in pupils' workbooks and in the quality of their reading. However, some pupils were ready to move on to harder and more challenging reading books.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the increased attainment of current key stage 2 pupils in mathematics is maintained
- the new approaches introduced to accelerate the progress made by disadvantaged pupils are reviewed and evaluated for their impact on improving outcomes
- disadvantaged pupils' attendance rates continue to rise.

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

Yours sincerely

Vondra Mays  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders and members of the governing body. You and I made a series of visits to a range of classes in key stage 1 and key stage 2. I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school. I spoke with a group of Year 5 and Year 6 disadvantaged pupils and I listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 4 reading.

In addition, I considered a broad range of documents, including attendance records and information on pupils' outcomes. Safeguarding practices were also reviewed. I examined the school's website to check that it meets the requirements for the publication of specified information.

I also considered the views of the 42 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), including the 18 free-text responses, as well as the school's own parental survey.