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Mr Mitch Frame
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Frame

Short inspection of Stuart Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. School leaders have dealt successfully with the previous inspection's areas for development. You and your deputy headteacher have formed a strong partnership since her appointment, to continue to raise standards in the school. Ineffective teaching is not tolerated. You provide support to help staff meet your high expectations and take appropriate action to tackle any underperformance. Morale is high among the staff and this was confirmed by the positive responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Your school improvement plan sets the challenge of more pupils, especially the most able pupils, achieving the higher standards in mathematics. Evidence reviewed identified that progress is being made. You also recognised that there is still work to do in improving attendance for disadvantaged pupils. Both you and your leadership team have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. Your governors are knowledgeable. They are well informed about what is going well and what needs further attention, and this informs their strategic decision-making. However, plans for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are not precise enough.

The school is a calm and happy place to learn, where pupils start the school day with a 'bounce' and a 'spring' in their step. You have ensured that pupils match the high expectations for their behaviour in the classroom, and how they conduct

themselves around and outside of the school. Parents overwhelmingly support and appreciate what the school does for their children. For example, a typical comment from one parent is 'The school is absolutely fantastic.' The online survey, Parent View, confirms that parents are positive about the quality of education and the care that the school provides.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leadership team and the governing body ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in your school. You continue to ensure that all arrangements are fit for purpose and your approach to record-keeping is rigorous. Although persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils is of concern, you are able to identify and explain the factors that lead to this.

The high standard of training that your staff and governors receive means that staff are well placed to spot signs and symptoms of abuse. For example, when I checked the understanding of safeguarding with staff from across the school, they could all clearly articulate how to keep children safe.

Pupils feel safe at school. They say that if they have any concerns or worries they are able to express them to an adult. Furthermore, one pupil told me, 'If I do not feel that I am being listened to, you can always go and see the headteacher.' Pupils are able to explain clearly how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, for example outside of school and on the internet. They told me that children are kind to each other, and that bullying sometimes can be confused with a disagreement. They also told me, 'If you do have a disagreement the teachers are quick to resolve it.'

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection we agreed the key lines of enquiry to secure evidence that the school remains good. I examined with you the school's strategy plan for disadvantaged pupils. We agreed that it required further refinement.

- My first line of enquiry related to the achievement of the most able pupils in mathematics. In 2016, very few Year 6 pupils achieved the higher standard across the school when compared to the national average. Evidence from lessons and work in pupils' books confirmed that good progress is being made in key stage 1, including for the most able disadvantaged pupils. In lessons, pupils are challenged effectively to do their very best and lessons promote challenge through well-matched activities. This is because teachers know the pupils' needs very well. Consequently, a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve a higher standard than previously. However, in key stage 2, activities for the most able pupils are not matched well to pupils' needs. Occasionally, activities designed for pupils are either too easy or too hard and progress for the most able pupils is consequently hindered.
- My second line of enquiry related to the achievement of the most able pupils in writing. Disadvantaged most-able pupils' outcomes at the end of 2016 in key

stage 1 fell well below national standards. This was also identified in key stage 2. However, in lessons visited in both key stage 1 and 2 we found that pupils were making good progress. In key stage 1 we reviewed books and identified that a significant proportion of pupils are already working at the higher standards expected for their age. In key stage 2, books reviewed and lessons visited also demonstrated that a large proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the higher standards. Writing outcomes in books demonstrated that pupils in key stage 2 had clearly mastered some of the more technical aspects of writing, including punctuation to convey purpose and meaning.

- My third line of enquiry was to check how well leaders are improving outcomes in grammar, punctuation and spelling for disadvantaged pupils. You had put plans for improving grammar, punctuation and spelling in place at the start of 2016. When we reviewed pupils' outcomes, it became apparent that disadvantaged pupils were making strong progress when compared with other pupils in school and with previous national expectations. No significant differences were identified within school. Pupils are spelling words appropriate for their age correctly and use an increasing range of more technical punctuation effectively. In key stage 2, pupils' improved grammar skills are reflected in higher standards of writing.
- A high standard of handwriting is insisted on throughout the school. Pupils write typically in a cursive fluid script, and in key stage 1 some pupils write with exceptional accuracy for their age. This is a direct result of the actions identified in your school improvement plan for 2016.
- The fourth line of enquiry related to the teaching of phonics in key stage 1. The school improvement plan for this year identified phonics as a high priority. In 2016, pupils fell below the national expectation for the Year 1 phonic screening check. As a result of high-quality phonics teaching, pupils are now making good progress. This was confirmed when I heard pupils read; they did so fluently, using their phonic knowledge competently to sound out unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 2 who did not pass the check last year were also heard reading and the impact of planned actions indicates that they will have a more positive outcome when they take the check again.
- The final key line of enquiry concerned the absence of disadvantaged pupils. Attendance overall has shown an improving pattern and is in line with the national average. However, the trend in absence and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils has not been as positive, and for some time has remained above the national figure. Persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils is an ongoing issue for the school. You work closely with families and external agencies to offer support and, with the help of the educational welfare officer, you have improved some pupils' attendance. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, including persistent absence, is not as good as that of other pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- activities provide the right level of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics, particularly in key stage 2
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves to be at least in line with national averages
- plans for disadvantaged pupils are evaluated regularly and adjusted accordingly to improve outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Middlemore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection. I also met with several groups of pupils, governors and several parents at the start of the school day. I held discussions with four governors, including the chair of governors, and several members of staff. I considered the school's self-evaluation, pupil premium strategy plan and related action plans. I looked at all safeguarding records and explored your approach to safer recruitment with the school administrator. Together, we looked at pupils' work in books from a range of subjects to review the progress being made. We focused particularly on the progress of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils. We also visited several lessons across the school in a range of subjects. I listened to several groups of pupils read and discussed with them their views of the school. I took account of the 40 responses to Parent View and the six responses to the staff questionnaire.