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Mrs J Jones
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Dear Mrs Jones

Short inspection of Redhill Junior and Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection, ensuring that Redhill remains a purposeful and exciting place in which to learn.

Since taking over as head in 2014 you have established a highly effective leadership team with an ambitious drive for improvement and a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all year groups. You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, you have identified appropriate improvement priorities which have resulted in more pupils making accelerated progress.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Children enter the school in Nursery at levels well below those expected for their age and with little or no English language. Children make exceptional progress through Nursery and Reception because of the relentless focus on developing their spoken language skills. By the end of key stage 1, pupils are achieving levels in line with their peers nationally.

As a result of actions you have taken following the previous inspection, the teaching of mathematics is now a particular strength of the school. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills confidently and fluently in all year groups. The work in pupils' books shows that they are able to solve

increasingly difficult problems effectively and give clear explanations for their answers. Consequently, the large majority of pupils, including the disadvantaged and most able pupils, are doing well in this subject. Standards in mathematics are rising. In 2016 pupils' progress in mathematics was significantly above national expectations.

Currently, however, not enough pupils reach higher standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. You have identified this and since September you have strengthened the teaching of reading. This is beginning to accelerate progress in reading so that more pupils are now targeted to achieve higher standards. You recognise that more still needs to be done to ensure that progress in English matches the strong progress in mathematics.

Redhill School community is one of immense diversity, as pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Pupils are highly respectful and tolerant of each other. They understand and appreciate differences between people, including those from different faiths and cultures. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils have an excellent work ethic and strive to achieve their best. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Redhill is a small school and staff know the pupils very well. Pupils say they are happy and feel safe in school. They have a good knowledge about different types of bullying and know what to do if it happens to them. They are confident that bullying is rare in school but that 'teachers would sort it out quickly' if it did happen. The school's behaviour logs show that bullying is rare and quickly and effectively dealt with.

There is a real sense of community between the school and parents. Parents greatly value the genuine 'open-door' policy and feel that teachers are always prepared to listen. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel that their children are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. As one parent said 'the school gives our children the right values'.

Attendance has been below national rates for several years. You have identified the reasons for this and taken effective steps to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Governors are very supportive of you and your staff and recognise the successful way in which you have addressed the areas for development and the challenges since the previous inspection. Governors have an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement as a result of the information you provide. They have clear roles and responsibilities and visit the school often. They have taken part in safeguarding training with the staff and monitor aspects of safeguarding with you. Newer governors are being well supported to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, you have identified that more needs to be done to further secure their understanding in order for them to be able to confidently challenge the information you give them.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements and the school website contains comprehensive information. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. Appropriate procedures are followed for the recruitment of staff. As an experienced designated safeguarding lead, you have established a strong safeguarding culture and have undertaken appropriate, up-to-date training. You use early help very effectively to support vulnerable families. Staff are knowledgeable about the school's safeguarding procedures. The school's system for reporting concerns is used appropriately by staff and this enables you to support vulnerable pupils and their families well.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe from a range of potential dangers. For example, a number of pupils have been appointed as 'digital leaders'. These young leaders have provided workshops on e-safety for all classes, parents and governors. The pupils I spoke with had a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online, both at home and at school. The parents I spoke with all felt that their children were safe and well cared for in school. Surveys carried out by the school also show this. A safeguarding audit is carried out annually in March which further demonstrates governors' commitment to safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' attendance has been below national rates for at least the last three years and in 2016, pupil attendance was below national rates for all groups of pupils. You are aware of this and since September you have been supporting several families to improve their children's attendance. This has been very successful and has resulted in the levels of persistent absence being significantly reduced.
- You use attendance information well to track and monitor the attendance of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Unauthorised absence for family holidays accounts for a significant proportion of absenteeism. You have made sure that the whole school community understands the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. As a result, pupils' rates of attendance have improved this year and are currently in line with national rates. However, you recognise that more still needs to be done to ensure that attendance remains in line with national rates.
- Progress in mathematics is now significantly above national expectations. The improvement in mathematics has been due to a focus on developing pupils' reasoning skills, particularly in key stage 2. This has enabled more pupils to achieve higher standards in mathematics. The mathematics seen in school during this inspection was of a high quality, with children demonstrating secure mathematical skills in all classes.
- A very large majority of pupils enter the school in Nursery working well below the expected level for their age and with little or no English language. They make rapid progress in early years and key stage 1 to reach standards at least in line with national expectations. Although pupils continue to make good progress in

mathematics through key stage 2, the progress they make in reading and writing is not as strong. Consequently, progress in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 lags behind progress in mathematics.

- You are aware of this discrepancy and have taken actions to remedy it. This year you have started working on strengthening pupils' reading skills. For example, you identified that children in key stage 2 needed to develop their higher-order analytical reading skills. As a result, you have developed a system of guided reading which supports pupils to develop these higher-order skills. You have also introduced an online reading system to encourage pupils to read more at home. You have raised the profile of reading across school by introducing reading areas in each classroom and inviting authors to come into school to work with the pupils. These actions have been effective and your assessment information shows that more pupils are now making better than expected progress in reading.
- There has also been a significant improvement in the quality of pupils' writing this year. Pupils' written work shows evidence of good progress over time in nearly all year groups. Where progress is not as strong, leaders are putting in additional support to ensure that pupils do not fall behind. School's assessment information shows that more pupils are now targeted to achieve greater depth in writing by the end of key stage 2. You acknowledge that more still needs to be done to ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve the standards they are capable of achieving in reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported to make good progress. Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional support. As a result, pupils eligible for additional funding are now making at least the same rates of progress as non-disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Although the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has increased over the last three years it is still below the national level. Children's skills are assessed when they first join the school in the early years. Assessment information shows that children typically start Redhill with levels of development below those found nationally. However, despite these lower starting points, the percentage of children attaining a good level of development has increased from 47% to 60% over the last three years. This shows children make exceptionally good progress in the early years.
- This strong progress can be seen in the children's work in their learning journals, by talking to children and observing them learning. Children in Nursery and Reception demonstrate strong learning behaviours. Nursery children were able to confidently talk about their learning and were enthusiastic to tell me all about the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. Children in Nursery and Reception were highly engaged in their learning. Adults use challenging questioning to develop children's understanding and language skills.
- Governors are very well informed by you about how the school is meeting its improvement priorities and the impact on the progress of pupils. There is evidence in governor minutes of challenging questions. However, this challenge could be greater and based on a deeper knowledge of the school's performance. For example, although the governors I met with had a good oversight of progress

as a whole, they could not confidently talk about the progress of different groups in different key stages or across different subjects. You have already identified the need to further strengthen governor skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors further strengthen their skills to enable them to play a more strategic role in school improvement and offer greater challenge and support to leaders
- the teaching of reading and writing continues to develop so that pupils' progress accelerates further and a greater proportion achieve at the higher level
- the rate of progress in English improves so that it matches the rate of progress in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Janet Satchwell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with senior leaders to review the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. At this meeting we agreed several lines of enquiry to ascertain the extent to which the school was maintaining a good standard of education.

I conducted a learning walk throughout the school with you, reviewing work in pupils' books, speaking to pupils and observing learning. I spoke to pupils in Years 2 and 3 and listened to them read. I carried out a scrutiny of pupils' writing books across the school. I met with leaders to discuss assessment and attendance information.

I held a meeting with representatives of the governing body and spoke with the school's education partner.

I conducted a range of safeguarding checks including a review of the school's single central record and the steps followed when recruiting new members of staff. I spoke with you in your capacity as designated safeguarding lead about work with external agencies and how the school supports vulnerable children and their families.

I scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: the school's website; governing body minutes; behaviour and bullying logs; teaching records; the school's self-evaluation form; school improvement priorities; training records; and child protection files.

I met with parents before school and reviewed the internal parents' survey conducted by the school. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire to generate a report. I took account of the one response to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.