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Mrs Sue Tudge
Headteacher
Hullavington CofE Primary and Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Tudge

Short inspection of Hullavington CofE Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 27 April 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 since the last inspection. You continue to lead the school effectively and have established the school at the centre of the village community. Together with staff, governors and pupils, your clear, passionate and determined leadership ensures that the school's values and positive atmosphere are palpable throughout the school. The leadership has well-defined core values of friendship, trust, honesty, kindness, happiness and love.

Pupils take their responsibilities seriously; older pupils support younger ones and actively find ways to help improve the school and the local community through their pupil voice. Individual pupil differences are valued in the school and the many individuals' talents are celebrated in many ways. You have successfully created a strong sense of teamwork, clear purpose and determination of staff and governors making sure that every pupil achieves their best.

Under your leadership, Hullavington Primary School has continued to flourish. All pupils find stability, high-quality care and success during their time, and especially the children of service families in the typically short time they are with you. You have created a strong family culture, which welcomes all newcomers and places the highest value on pupils' learning. Pupils, teachers, parents and governors are proud to be part of the school community.

Since the previous inspection, you have opened a Nursery. This gives children a good start to their education. They are immersed in a wide range of well-designed activities. You recognise that more needs to be done to develop children's experience of learning outdoors and have ambitious plans to improve the Nursery grounds to this end.

You are not complacent and recognise that while pupils' attainment at key stage 2 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016, progress in writing and mathematics can be further developed across the school to be as good as reading. You also acknowledge that further improvements can be made to the achievement of the most able pupils, especially in key stage 1.

You act decisively to address underachievement. This is demonstrated well by the action taken to improve outcomes in writing and mathematics following your analysis of the 2016 results. You are focused on continual improvement, including the need to improve the phonics skills of boys throughout the school. This is not only to increase the proportions of pupils passing the Year 1 phonics screening check, which is presently in line with the national average, but also to secure a better awareness of strategies for spelling by the end of key stage 2.

Parents are tremendously supportive of the school. Parents who spoke to the inspector at the start of the day were effusive about the quality of education that their children were receiving. They value the drive you have for their children. Parents' views reflect how the caring environment in school helps children to develop their confidence and make good progress, preparing them for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They enjoy coming to school, are enthusiastic about their learning, and value the help and support that they receive from their teachers and other adults. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in their lessons, and say that they enjoy a range of different subjects. This is because the curriculum is appropriately broad and interesting. Pupils told me that they have particularly enjoyed the school trips, which have helped them in their learning. They also like the way in which they have been given strategies to help them 'solve their problems'. The use of the school garden as a resource enhances pupils' learning in the wider curriculum.

A strong emphasis is also placed on developing pupils' physical and mental well-being. The school is rightly proud of its inclusion award and international schools award, among many recognitions. Pupils enjoy the wide variety of choice offered in after-school clubs including for cookery, music and sport. They also appreciate the opportunities they have to take part in a range of sporting tournaments. These help pupils to develop their teamwork skills, and the friendships that older children make with pupils from other schools help to prepare them for the next stage in their education.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of mathematics teaching to raise standards and challenge the most able pupils consistently.

You have appointed a knowledgeable and enthusiastic mathematics leader, who is supporting teachers to develop pupils' reasoning skills. We agreed that, while teachers are using a helpful, consistent approach to teaching mathematics, there are times when activities could be adapted more quickly to meet the needs of individual pupils so that all are challenged at the appropriate level.

Leaders were also asked to improve writing at the end of key stage 1 to ensure more pupils reach higher standards, by strengthening spelling skills and providing more opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work. You have addressed this issue through continual monitoring and a new approach to writing, grammar and spelling across the school. This action is resulting in greater evidence of sustained writing across the school. However, we agreed that there are still not enough pupils reaching the higher standards in writing.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in your school. The leadership of this vital aspect of the school's work is very effective, especially given the high mobility of your school population. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including protocols and practices for record-keeping. There are secure systems in place to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children in the school.

The pupils that I spoke to emphatically agreed that they feel safe in school. This is because of the culture of care that you have created. Governors, parents and pupils are united in their praise for both you and your staff for your unwavering commitment to ensuring that pupils feel safe, both physically and emotionally. Staff know what actions to take if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being and understand their responsibilities well.

Inspection findings

- An inspection focus was on pupils' writing, where pupils have not made the good progress they make in reading. Part of the issue is the high mobility due to the pupils of military families having a short time in the school. This is managed well but does have an effect on assessment information. The introduction in upper key stage 2 last year of a new approach to teaching writing resulted in improved attainment. This system has now been introduced into the rest of the school. Pupils' books show that they now successfully attempt more advanced sentence structure and vocabulary in comparison with their starting points. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to produce plausible spellings of more challenging words, such as 'exploshun' (explosion). The school's own assessment of progress in phonics shows that pupils are making greater progress.
- You recognise that the school needs to focus on improving writing across the subjects and classes, especially challenging the most able pupils more. Work is already under way, led confidently by your assistant headteacher. A passion for writing is gaining momentum. I saw evidence of pupils improving their editing skills and some impressive writing in science books. Teachers understand that

the most able pupils should achieve standards that are well above average. Errors in pupils' workbooks suggest that teachers are not always giving as much attention to detail in foundation subjects as they do in the literacy books.

- The second focus was to see whether the pupils are being challenged enough in their mathematics to improve progress in key stages 1 and 2. The school's own analysis shows that the progress pupils make is improving. The work in pupils' mathematics books shows good progress across each year group. Increasingly, pupils, including the most able, are beginning to use new strategies that strengthen their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematics and develop their reasoning skills. As a result, more pupils are beginning to reach higher levels of attainment in mathematics and the most able pupils are making better progress.
- When I looked at the work in pupils' mathematics books, I saw that some specific groups of pupils have work set at the right level. The challenges of 'mild, hot, spicy and scorchio' have grabbed pupils' enthusiasm to challenge themselves. It is clear that middle-ability pupils are making good progress this year. However, the most able pupils in both key stage 1 and 2 are not sufficiently challenged to reach the higher standards. Discussions with the most able pupils showed that they felt that some of the work was too easy.
- The Nursery, which the school took over 18 months ago, has made a positive difference to the school and community and was another line of enquiry. As one parent commented: 'It gives the children a great start and they have so much fun.' Children enjoy their activities and quickly develop a range of skills. Staff track and celebrate children's development and ensure that parents are included in their learning. Children's early reading, writing and counting skills are encouraged, both indoors and outdoors. We agreed that the outdoor environment is limited but offers potential for further development so that it has a positive impact on children's learning experiences and gives them the ability to explore and develop their language and creative skills. The school has plans drawn up to improve the available space to make it as exciting a provision as the rest of the early years outdoor provision. Children's transition from the Nursery class into the Reception class is smooth. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen steadily over the last three years and is above average.
- The final line of enquiry related to the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The published assessment information indicates that this group has higher-than-average persistent absence. There are valid medical reasons behind most of this absence, such as hospital or specialist appointments. You track each pupil's attendance carefully. You have put in successful measures to improve individual pupils' attendance, including the support of a parental support adviser. Leaders have identified the different reasons why pupils have a high absence rate. They are working very closely with parents to improve their children's attendance. This work is making a significant impact and the overall absence and persistent absence rates of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now broadly in line with national averages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers adapt tasks and approaches flexibly in response to pupils' skills and understanding, especially the most able, so that their learning is deepened in mathematics and writing
- the quality of outdoor provision in the Nursery is raised to enable children to have as good an experience as the children in the Reception class.

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

Yours sincerely

Terry Mortimer
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your assistant headteacher and other staff members. The inspection also involved a meeting with the chair of governors, and four other governors, as well as speaking with a representative of the local authority. There were 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 16 responses to the staff questionnaire, as well as 20 responses to the pupils' questionnaire. Parents' views were sought when they brought their children to school. We visited all the classrooms together, to observe pupils' learning and talk to them about it. Work by pupils with a range of abilities was looked at in mathematics and English and in topics. I listened to a range of pupils reading. A wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, equalities, assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and safeguarding, was also examined.