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Mrs Candida Jarrott-Chase
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Jarrott-Chase

Short inspection of Godstone Village School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since joining the school in September 2015, you have built on the strengths of previous leadership. You have created a strong team of committed staff who place the needs of the pupils at the heart of their work. You have established a climate of high expectations in which staff work hard to provide pupils with the best start in life. Many parents who responded to the online survey commented on the positive changes you have introduced. One parent wrote: 'The headteacher has brought life and laughter into the school and I feel the pupils are now experiencing opportunities they would otherwise have missed out on, for example, "Young Voices" just to name one.'

You, together with staff and governors, have worked tirelessly to improve standards so that pupils across the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is effective across the school. Teachers plan interesting work that inspires pupils and motivates them to work hard. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, pupils had to read 'mixed-up' sentences about Edward the Elder and decide whether or not these were relevant to that period in history. They then had to arrange the sentences in chronological order in preparation for writing about Edward the Elder. This was a challenging activity that they enjoyed and so made good progress.

You have improved the learning environment by creating a designated library that is attractive and furnished with good-quality books that support pupils' learning and

reading skills. Classrooms are bright and attractive, with displays of pupils' work. Corridors and shared areas are inviting and reflect the different aspects of learning that take place. For example, artwork based on aboriginal art is attractive and contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. You have successfully worked with parents and the education welfare officer to improve the attendance rates for a small number of pupils whose attendance has been of concern. Attendance is now broadly average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has decreased.

Pupils enjoy school. One described school as 'a home from home'. Pupils speak highly of the school and trust and respect their teachers. They say that staff care for them and take their concerns seriously. They know that staff will listen to their ideas and opinions, and they feel that they have a say in making decisions that affect them. Pupils say that staff treat pupils equally and fairly, and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. They say that there is nothing they would like to change about the school.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspectors recognised many strengths of the school. They asked that leaders should increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise standards further. Since then, a number of new teachers have joined the school. Nevertheless, you have ensured that the quality of teaching is never less than good. You worked in partnership with advisers from the local authority to develop the teaching of both English and mathematics in the light of the changes to the national curriculum. You have made good use of the local authority's consultants in order to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate. Teachers in all classes provide pupils with feedback in line with the school's marking and feedback policy. They provide time for pupils to respond to feedback so that pupils learn from their errors. Consequently, standards have continued to improve.

You, your staff and governors are not complacent. You know that there is some variation in the way in which phonics and reading are taught, and you are taking steps to iron out these inconsistencies. Your governors know about standards in school. However, they do not make enough use of published information to alert them to the learning and progress of some key groups of pupils. This restricts their ability to challenge leaders further. For example, they did not know that the most able pupils in key stage 1 did not achieve as well as they should in reading in the national assessments in 2016. The large majority of parents who responded to the online survey are positive about the school. However, a small minority who made written comments feel that information is not always communicated at the right time, and that some communications contain unacceptable errors.

Safeguarding is effective.

All staff know that it is their moral as well as their legal responsibility to ensure that pupils are safe and that pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are rare. On the odd occasion that incidents do occur, adults are quickly on hand to resolve

issues. Pupils feel that they are well supported and that they can go to adults for advice and help. They are very well aware of potential dangers associated with modern technology. They know that they should never provide personal information to strangers when using tablets, smartphones or computers.

Policies and practices meet statutory requirements and appropriate checks are made on all adults who work with pupils. Staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding. This ensures that they know exactly what to do should they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk from harm. There is an appropriate focus on maintaining an awareness of radicalisation and e-safety. There are good relationships with external agencies and leaders are tenacious in securing the right support for pupils and their families, at the right time.

Inspection findings

- In addition to evaluating the school's procedures for safeguarding and the impact that new leaders and managers have had since the previous inspection, I also looked at how well disadvantaged pupils achieve in key stage 2. I looked at how well the most able pupils read by the end of Year 2, and also at the effectiveness of the actions taken to improve the attendance of some groups of pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils now achieve well across key stage 2. Leaders have helped teachers to identify the specific barriers to learning experienced by these pupils. Some disadvantaged pupils have additional learning needs. Skilled teaching assistants provide extra help for these pupils in class so that their learning progresses at a similar rate to that of other pupils. Teachers in all classes ensure that the emotional as well as academic needs of their disadvantaged pupils are met, which helps this group of pupils to make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils have equal access to all activities offered by school so they enjoy the same life chances as other pupils.
- Teachers have equally high expectations for disadvantaged pupils as they do for other pupils and they provide them with challenging activities that meet their needs. However, not all teachers insist on the highest standards of presentation in all of their books. This spoils the overall appearance of their work and occasionally leads to inaccuracies in pupils' calculation and spelling. School leaders are taking action to address this and recent improvements in pupils' books are evident.
- There has been a drive to improve the teaching of phonics and this has been largely successful in improving pupils' reading skills across the Reception class and key stage 1. Pupils apply their phonics to read unknown words with confidence by blending the individual sounds together to form the words. The most able pupils in Year 2 read fluently, confidently and with obvious enjoyment. Just occasionally, the reading books provided for pupils in some classes are too hard and do not match pupils' interests and maturity.
- Pupils build on this good start across key stage 2, when they are taught to read for a variety of purposes. In guided reading sessions, different groups of pupils are provided with interesting activities that inspire their imagination and enable them to progress well. For example, in a Year 4 guided reading session, one

group of pupils had a short descriptive excerpt. They read this carefully and answered questions that helped them to understand why writers choose particular vocabulary and linguistic styles to express their thoughts and ideas.

- School leaders have worked with parents to improve pupils' rates of attendance and this has led to an overall improvement in attendance for pupils. There has been a small number of pupils, mainly disadvantaged boys who also have special educational needs and/or disabilities, whose attendance has given cause for concern. School leaders have identified this group of pupils and are working closely with the education welfare officer, parents and the pupils to improve attendance. Early indications are that this is showing signs of success.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- reading books provided for pupils meet their interests and learning needs
- governors interrogate the school's published performance information more thoroughly to give them an accurate view of where weaknesses lie
- the information provided to parents is of the highest quality.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, three governors, including the chair of governors, and a group of pupils. I also met with an adviser from the local authority who has provided support to the school in recent years. I visited six lessons, accompanied by you, to observe teaching and to talk to pupils about what they were learning. I looked at work in pupils' books and I listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 reading. I considered the 48 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and I took into account written responses that were posted on free text. I analysed a range of documentation, including: the school improvement plan; the school's self-evaluation; and documentation relating to how well the school keeps pupils safe.