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Mr Nathan Linfield
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Dear Mr Linfield

Short inspection of Chalkwell Hall Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have a well-defined understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are taking effective steps to secure further improvements.

You have a clear ambition to provide the best teaching for all pupils. You have responded effectively to the areas for improvement identified in the previous Ofsted inspection of the school in June 2013. Your chosen approach to providing opportunities for teachers to learn from each other is proving successful. Consequently, teaching across the school continues to be of a good standard. You continue to overhaul your curriculum. In mathematics, for example, you have replaced old programmes of study and teachers are now matching the work they set to the differing needs of pupils well. You link the performance targets of teachers and other adults to the work they do to support pupils' good progress.

Teachers develop highly positive working relationships with pupils, which helps pupils to make good progress. Pupils work hard during lessons. They are not afraid to answer questions in front of other pupils. They trust the safe environment teachers have created for them. Pupils are confident learners.

Your understanding of the importance of providing extra help for disadvantaged pupils means that they make good progress. You routinely identify the barriers they face to learning. The progress they make is closely monitored. If they do not make

good progress, you put precisely targeted help in place. As a consequence, disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with other pupils nationally.

Pupils are highly positive about the school. In their meeting with me, pupils described the school as 'brilliant', 'fun', 'exciting' and 'diverse'. They enjoy the learning opportunities teachers give them and value the way people with different backgrounds and different outlooks on life are treated with respect and care. They enjoy opportunities such as participating in class assemblies, and they appreciate the 'sensible' rules. Pupils enjoy attending this school.

Parents appreciate the good education that their children receive. In their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, parents commented positively on the range of after-school activities provided by the school and on the support their children receive. All parents who responded to the survey said that they would recommend the school to others.

Governors work well in partnership with you. They challenge the information you give them and check that it is accurate. For example, governors ask to see pupils' books to see for themselves the quality of pupils' work. Governors visit the school often to see first hand the experience pupils have in their education. They speak with teachers and other leaders to develop a rounded understanding of the impact of any school improvement initiatives. Governors monitor the progress leaders make on school development priorities well and hold you to account for this. They make a valuable contribution to the ongoing improvement of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have secured an open culture of safeguarding pupils. The arrangements to safeguard pupils are fit for purpose. Your procedures for staff reporting concerns about the well-being of pupils are easy to follow. When staff raise concerns, leaders respond quickly. Leaders assess the concerns and seek help from external agencies if necessary. Leaders regularly review the concerns that have been passed to them to ensure that actions are taken to help pupils.

You understand the difficulties which are most likely to affect pupils at this school. You provide information and guidance to parents to support them in keeping their children safe. You provide a range of activities about topics relating to well-being to educate pupils. For example, you teach pupils about e-safety through an e-safety day and through personal, social and health education. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.

Pupils feel safe. Pupils spoke with me about how they get on well with each other. They say that, 'Everyone respects each other' and that pupils are, 'Always kind and helpful'. Pupils told me that bullying does not happen often. When it does happen, teachers deal with bullying quickly and effectively.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry to ascertain whether the school remains good was to establish how well the teaching of mathematics meets the needs of different groups of pupils. In 2017, different groups of pupils in Year 6, including girls and disadvantaged pupils, did less well than other pupils. Your previous Ofsted inspection report identified that work was not always closely matched to the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities.
- I found that most pupils currently on roll make good progress in mathematics. Pupils of varying abilities complete work which is both appropriate to their age and well matched to their needs. There is little difference between the progress of different groups of pupils. Girls make similar progress to boys. Disadvantaged pupils make progress in line with that of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally.
- You have changed the way in which mathematics is taught. The most able pupils are well supported to excel in their learning. They are taught to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and ideas. They apply their learning well. They learn to solve complex problems and develop their mathematical reasoning. As a result, these pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Pupils who find mathematics difficult are supported to learn the same concepts as their peers, but they apply this to more straightforward problems. Because they understand the work, these pupils become confident mathematicians. Their confidence helps them to make more rapid progress from their starting points than they otherwise would.
- Teachers are well supported by additional adults in helping pupils to do well at mathematics. An extra teacher has been appointed to work with the most able mathematicians in order to develop their understanding further so that more of them work at greater depth.
- You are aware that, in mathematics, some teaching is less effective than the majority of teaching. You are taking effective actions to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better.
- My next line of enquiry related to how well leaders understand the needs of small groups of pupils. Previous key stage 2 assessments indicate that, in the past, some small groups of pupils who have identified needs have made less progress than other pupils nationally.
- The small number of pupils in some groups means that it is inappropriate to comment directly on the progress each group is making. However, your strategies to support groups of pupils who have identified needs are effective. The pupils benefit from carefully considered additional support, which ensures that they make good progress. You recognise that there is still more to do to enhance the support you give to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they all make equally good progress.
- My final line of enquiry related to the consistency of the quality of teaching in writing. Your previous Ofsted inspection report identified that pupils did not consistently spell new and commonly used words correctly. The progress pupils

made in 2017 in writing did not follow a clear and consistent pattern. I wanted to understand whether teachers had consistently high expectations for all pupils.

- In writing, as in reading and mathematics, the progress that all pupils make is supported well by your chosen use of objective targets for pupils to achieve. These ensure that expectations are consistent for all pupils who have the same starting points. Because of this, teachers and pupils have high expectations for what all pupils are capable of. The work pupils complete, and the standards they achieve, are therefore appropriate for their age and ability.
- You are aware that the quality of some teaching of writing still varies. This is why some pupils make even better progress than their peers. You are taking effective steps to improve this so that all pupils are consistently well taught.
- You monitor the progress pupils make in different subjects and in different classes, including in writing, well. Your analysis accurately tells you that there is some difference in the progress pupils make between classes. There is not usually a significant difference between the achievements of different groups of pupils. Where there is a difference, you use your monitoring information to identify which individuals are falling behind. You find out precisely what the barriers to their learning are and you target the support to overcome those barriers. As a consequence, pupils who begin to fall behind are supported to catch up.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching across all classes is consistently good or better
- the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is consistently strong so that the pupils make good progress from their starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Andy Hemmings
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you, other leaders and two governors. I met with pupils and visited lessons either with you or with another leader.

I looked at performance information and reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's self-evaluation, provision for pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities, safeguarding arrangements, and analysis of the spending of pupil premium and the physical education and sport premium.

I considered the 98 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 157 responses to the pupil survey and 22 responses to the staff survey.