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Ms Louise Young  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Young

### **Short inspection of Yealmpton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 November 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 October 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 and your staff provide a safe, nurturing environment that enables pupils to flourish into confident learners, who are self-assured members of the community.

You and your leaders, including governors, have a good grasp of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. The school's self-evaluation is detailed and thorough. It leads to precise priorities for improving outcomes for pupils. Furthermore, the governing body is well aware of the areas for development. Governors offer effective critical challenge and support where required to ensure that improvements take shape in a timely fashion. Their regular visits to the school provide valuable information with which they hold you and your leadership team to account.

Your improvement plans, which are sharp and specific, characterise the school and your leadership. For example, you identified that achievement in key stage 1 for most-able pupils was below that of other pupils nationally in 2016. However, by the end of the academic year 2017, most-able pupils achieved above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. You also identified in your plan that pupils' attendance was not good enough. Using a more systematic and rigorous approach to supporting families, you successfully improved attendance. Thus, you reduced the number of pupils who were absent and persistently absent.

Pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes to learning are a real strength. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and caring. Pupils hold their teachers in high esteem and are aware of the high expectations instilled upon them. As a result, pupils are confident and report that they are not afraid to take risks with their learning. Pupils are very enthusiastic about what they learn, and you have ensured that they have access to a broad and rich curriculum. The school's approach to having specialist subject teachers, teaching science and physical education, has had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, are positive about the school and the support that their children receive. As one parent commented, 'Moving to Yealmpton Primary School was the best thing she has ever done.' This comment was typical of many gathered over the inspection.

Since the previous inspection, you have successfully addressed the areas for improvement that were identified. We observed together pupils being given opportunities to take ownership of their learning and looked together at their books to see how this was developing their subject knowledge.

You recognise that there are still areas in which the school needs to strengthen and improve further. For example, you agreed that planned writing activities for less-able pupils in key stage 2 were not always well matched. Similarly, there are times when expectations of most-able pupils' writing are too challenging in key stage 1, and this hinders their progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is effective. The culture of safeguarding is evident across every aspect of the school's work. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training. When asked, staff demonstrated up-to-date, accurate knowledge of current safeguarding requirements. Governors are diligent in their frequent checks, fulfilling their statutory requirements. They are also rigorous in ensuring that the necessary recruitment checks have been carried out before appointing staff to the school. Clear processes are in place so that all staff know how to report any concerns. Safeguarding records are detailed and of a high quality. Case studies show that leaders carefully and swiftly follow up any issues, working effectively with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils.

The curriculum supports pupils' safety well. Pupils learn how to manage risks appropriately. For example, when using the internet pupils are able to articulate how to report a concern and are able to identify what justifies any inappropriate actions towards them. Pupils say that they feel safe and that teachers help them to be safe inside and outside of school. They say that bullying rarely happens and that, if it does occur, it is managed well by teachers and leaders in the school. They trust that the adults around them will keep them safe. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, felt that their children were safe and happy.

## Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed together a number of key lines of enquiry. The first line of enquiry focused on how effectively writing is taught across key stage 2. You and your team acknowledged that after a number of years of high results at the end of Year 6, the dip in outcomes in 2017 was unexpected. In the 2017 Year 6 tests, the proportion of pupils who made the expected progress was low when compared with national figures. This decline in the 2017 outcomes prompted a key line of enquiry to focus on boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, because they performed particularly less well than other pupils nationally.
- We visited lessons and saw a hive of activity, where pupils were thoroughly engrossed by their teachers and activities. Together, we observed effective, high-quality teaching with some excellent features. As a result, the vast majority of pupils were making strong progress. The culture of high expectations of what pupils could achieve permeated key stage 2. However, we agreed that some of the activities planned for the less able pupils could have been better matched to meet their needs. In the books we looked at, it was clear that progress for the less able pupils was not always as positive as for other groups of pupils.
- The second line of enquiry considered the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. In 2016, persistent absence was high for both groups. Leaders have addressed the high absence by establishing a more rigorous system and effective action is taken where necessary to support pupils. You work in close partnership with other agencies, such as the education welfare officer, to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. As a result, you have had a significant impact on improving attendance for both of the groups and attendance figures for the academic year 2016/17 were better than the national average. Furthermore, information for the current academic year shows that the improvements are being sustained and continue to be higher than the current national averages.
- The next line of enquiry looked at the extent to which the most able pupils in key stage 1 are supported to ensure that they reach the higher standards. You shared the performance information from 2017. This showed the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 increased significantly from the previous year. The figures for each subject compare favourably with the national averages. Furthermore, information about current performance shows that this positive trend has continued. We reviewed books together and observed teaching of a high quality, where pupils were observed working at levels above what would be expected for their age. However, we agreed that some of the activities set for the most able pupils were too challenging.
- My final line of enquiry focused on how successfully leaders are supporting boys from average starting points to make similar or better progress than girls in writing by the end of key stage 1. In 2016, boys performed significantly less well than girls and when compared with the national figures for boys. As a result, you restructured your approach to teaching writing, with a focus on a new 'talk for

writing' strategy. You adopted this approach to enthuse boys' interests and meet their needs. This approach has been successful for you and is enabling boys to develop their writing skills in a more structured way. Teachers carefully choose texts to study that will appeal to boys and this is leading to more positive outcomes than have been achieved historically. Furthermore, we observed teachers skilfully securing boys' understanding and then building on their prior learning in a timely manner that ensured strong progress was being made. Observations of learning in classrooms, reviews of books and assessment information for 2017 show that boys are now making as much progress as girls at key stage 1.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- writing activities in key stage 2 are well matched so that pupils can reach their full potential
- the level of challenge is improved for the most able pupils in key stage 1 in writing.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive of the multi academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. 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, the executive primary principal, assistant headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and middle leaders. I met with seven members of the trust board and local governing body, including the chair and the chief executive of the trust. I scrutinised documents, including the school's self-evaluation document, the school's improvement plan, external safeguarding audit, attendance information, performance information and safeguarding documentation, including case studies. I also visited lessons with you to speak with pupils, look at examples of their work and observe their behaviour. I took account of the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, 21 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 68 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 66 free-text responses. I also met with a group of parents at the start of the school day.