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Ms Beverley Boswell  
Headteacher  
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Oxfordshire  
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Dear Ms Boswell

### **Short inspection of The Grange Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your leadership is inspirational and perceptive. As one parent replied when asked about the school, 'Amazing leadership, amazing values.' You have created a warm, welcoming and attractive school environment that encourages everyone to play their part in school life and to do their best. You have an effective senior team. Each member is astute and has an accurate assessment of the school's performance. Checks on teaching form part of a thorough monitoring process which improves outcomes for pupils and the quality of teaching. Leaders and governors have high expectations and their decisions are informed by meticulous analysis. The experienced and knowledgeable governors monitor closely the school's impact on pupils. This enables them to provide effective support and challenge for leaders. One governor aptly described their close monitoring, explaining that they use 'a jeweller's eyeglass'.

You and the leadership team have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing improvement. Leaders, other staff and governors know and understand these well. You have used your in-depth knowledge of pupils' achievement to create a sharply focused improvement plan. This is successfully maximising pupils' progress. You lead by example and are determined to improve further the quality of teaching, learning and the wider curriculum.

Pupils enjoy school. They behave exceptionally well and have highly positive

attitudes to learning. Pupils say that learning is interesting and enjoyable. One pupil said, 'I would like English and maths lessons to be increased by half an hour.' Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. They listen attentively and respect other people's ideas. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported sensitively and effectively. Targeted support meets their individual needs well. One parent said, 'The school has been so helpful with my child. The teacher always tells me how the day has gone.'

You have responded effectively to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. One of the aspects that you were asked to improve was pupils' writing in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in these year groups, and across the school, achieve well in writing. They write widely in different subjects, and for different audiences and purposes. However, although achievement in writing is good and has strengthened, the teaching of writing has some weaknesses. You acknowledge that pupils are not consistently challenged enough when writing, and do not have enough opportunities to write at length. Therefore, although overall progress in writing is good, pupils could be making even better progress.

Inspectors also asked you to improve the quality of teaching. Teaching has improved and as a result, pupils' learning has strengthened in a wide range of subjects, especially in mathematics. This has been achieved by leaders' close monitoring of the quality of teaching and the sharing of good practice.

Parents are very positive about the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to others. You work to continually improve the support for pupils, parents and the wider community. The 'Grange Way', which encourages 'caring for everyone and everything' is threaded throughout the school, creating a highly nurturing and supportive atmosphere in which pupils thrive. As one pupil said, 'It is the glue that sticks us all together.'

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding that runs through all of the school's work. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Training for staff and governors is up to date and carefully documented. Staff are knowledgeable about how to identify pupils at risk of harm and how to keep pupils safe. They know how to use the school's referral system to report promptly any concerns. You are proactive and tenacious in following up any concerns about pupils' safety.

You, as the designated safeguarding lead, work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe. Those who are responsible for staff recruitment have completed training at the appropriate level. Vetting procedures for the recruitment of staff and governors are thorough.

Pupils feel safe at school and say that there are many staff they can talk to should they have a concern. As one pupil replied, when asked if they feel safe at school,

'Yes, I really do.' Pupils say that teachers and support staff listen and help them sort out any problems quickly. The school's children and family officer provides high-quality support and makes sure that parents receive the right help at the right time. All of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, confirmed that their children feel safe. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare. If it does happen, they have complete confidence in staff to deal with it quickly and effectively.

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of this inspection, we agreed on a number of key lines of enquiry. The first two of these concerned the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- You have ensured that the importance of good attendance is highlighted to all pupils and parents. For example, displays around the school show the precise attendance rates for each class. This has developed a healthy and competitive drive for pupils to attend school regularly.
- You have established effective systems to check pupils' attendance on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. You know the reasons why any pupil is absent from school and you are working to remove the barriers to good attendance that some pupils may face. If there are concerns, you take effective action to provide support to families. You also challenge and encourage parents to make sure that their children attend regularly. Individual case studies show that, as a result of your actions, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved significantly. Attendance overall is now broadly average for these two groups of pupils and shows signs of rising further as the academic year continues.
- Leaders have also acted in a considered way to reduce rates of persistent absence for these pupils. Persistent absence reduced in the last school year and has improved significantly since September. You work closely with external agencies. For example, you and your staff work closely with specialists from the local authority so that parents are supported to help their child to attend school regularly. As a result, persistent absence has decreased and is broadly average for these two groups of pupils. However, leaders understand the need to keep a constant check on the absence rates for some pupils, particularly for those pupils who previously did not attend school regularly.
- Another key line of enquiry we considered was the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, in writing. This is because disadvantaged pupils' achievement in writing dipped in 2016. Together with staff, you have identified the barriers to learning faced by this group of pupils. You hold regular meetings where their achievement is analysed in detail and additional support, when needed, is quickly implemented. The school's most recent assessment information shows that the difference between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, and that of other pupils, is diminishing quickly. Work in pupils' books confirms this. Despite these improvements, there are times when teachers do not question pupils in enough detail about their writing. This means that pupils do not develop their writing

skills as rapidly as they could.

- Work in pupils' workbooks and discussions with pupils show that disadvantaged pupils find their work challenging and are being encouraged to work at a deeper level. This is helping them to progress well. Pupils relish this challenge and view mistakes as learning opportunities. Pupils work very well with one another in the 'learning clinics' in the classrooms, when tackling tricky problems, and help and support each other. However, you acknowledge that although achievement in writing is good, there is still more to do. There are limited opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills in longer pieces of work.
- During the inspection, I also explored the progress made in writing by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The support for these pupils is another positive aspect of the school's work. These pupils benefit from a wide range of effective support to develop their writing skills. For example, in the 'secret writers club', staff provide meaningful learning opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge of punctuation. Support staff and pupils have positive relationships. Consequently, pupils willingly follow instructions and strive to do their very best in these sessions.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities also have good opportunities to write in a wide range of subjects, such as history and science. This is helping them to make strong progress in their writing about events in the past and present. Leaders, teachers and parents meet together to agree and review pupils' support plans and targets. Their next learning steps are planned well, so that pupils' skills are developed systematically. This support and guidance is helping pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to improve their skills and knowledge. As a result, they are making good progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length to further develop and apply their skills
- staff provide a higher level of challenge when questioning pupils about their writing to develop their skills more rapidly.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, other leaders and members of the governing body. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I visited all classes with you, including the indoor and outdoor areas for the Reception class. I spoke with pupils and looked at work in their books. I also observed pupils' behaviour and conduct around school. I considered the 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including parents' 84 free-text comments. In addition, I spoke with parents in the playground at the end of the school day. I took account of 26 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 176 responses to the pupil survey. I considered a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, staff recruitment checks, information relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour, the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plan.