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Mrs Michelle Brown
Singlewell Primary School
Mackenzie Way
Gravesend
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Dear Mrs Brown

Short inspection of Singlewell Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your team have established a positive and inclusive atmosphere in the school. You and your staff provide strong role models for pupils and have high expectations of their learning and behaviour.

Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming. They speak to adults respectfully and behave well throughout the school. Pupils enjoy learning, get on well together and are keen to do their best.

Consistently effective teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities make strong progress, both academically and personally, as they move up through the year groups. By the end of Year 6, pupils are mature, responsible and successful learners and share your ambitions for their future. For example, during the inspection, some of the oldest pupils commented on how well the school has prepared them for the next stage of their education and spoke excitedly about their plans for secondary schools.

You and your team have addressed the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection fully. Inspectors asked you to give pupils more opportunities to use their writing skills in different subjects. They also asked you to improve pupils' achievement in reading. You and your team have reviewed and updated the teaching of reading and writing since the previous inspection. You have increased

opportunities for pupils to write in different subjects and have made the teaching of reading a top priority across the school. You have developed a strong reading culture so that pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy and celebrate books. Attractive and inviting reading areas in the classrooms and around the school capture pupils' interest and encourage them to 'curl up' with a book. Developments in the teaching of reading and writing have ensured that pupils of all ages and abilities make strong progress in English.

You and your leadership team have an accurate view of the school's performance. You regularly check that pupils are learning as well as they should and adjust teaching wherever needed to improve pupils' progress. You are clear about future priorities for the school's development. For example, you have already identified that the most able pupils could achieve even more in reading and mathematics.

High staff morale in the school illustrates your success in ensuring that all members of staff feel valued. Parents speak very positively about the school's work. One parent's comment reflects the views of many: 'Keep up the good work!'

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team give pupils' safety an appropriately high priority. You make sure that the school is a well-organised, safe and attractive learning environment for staff and pupils. Effective leadership, strong relationships and clear routines ensure that the school operates smoothly.

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You provide good-quality safeguarding training for staff and governors, as well as regular updates about any changes in safeguarding requirements. As a result, all members of your team understand their responsibility for pupils' safety. They are alert to pupils' needs and knowledgeable about what to do if they have any concerns. Well-established and effective safeguarding procedures provide a secure framework for the school's work.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on:
 - the extent to which pupils use and practise writing skills in a range of subjects, and their progress in writing
 - how effectively teaching ensures that the most able pupils achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics
 - how well leaders ensure that pupils are safe.
- Leaders have made changes to the school's curriculum since the previous inspection so that pupils have ample opportunity to practise and refine their English skills in a wide range of subjects. For example, in a recent history topic, Year 6 pupils put their English skills into practice when writing formal letters to Henry VIII. Meanwhile, in science, pupils use scientific language to record experiments and to explain their conclusions. Activities such as these contribute

well to pupils' strong progress in English and to their enjoyment of school.

- Teachers are more knowledgeable about teaching writing skills than at the time of the previous inspection. They have high expectations of pupils' written work and give pupils clear advice about what they need to do to move to the next stage in their learning. Pupils learn to write successfully for a range of different purposes and become proficient writers by the end of Year 6. In 2016, standards in writing at the end of key stage 2 were above the national average, with a similarly positive picture in 2017.
- Leaders have improved the teaching of reading and mathematics since the previous inspection. They have used good-quality training successfully to update teachers' subject knowledge and to increase teachers' expectations of pupils' learning. As a result, pupils make better progress in reading and mathematics than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teachers use questioning more effectively than previously to deepen pupils' understanding in English and mathematics. They give pupils increasingly challenging work so that pupils have to think hard. However, these improvements are not yet fully established in all classes. Teaching does not yet equip the most able pupils with the advanced skills needed to achieve the highest standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers make good use of texts and books to develop pupils' reading and to encourage them to read more widely. Meanwhile, in mathematics, recent improvements in the teaching of reasoning skills ensure that pupils tackle number problems with increasing confidence.
- Rigorous safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are secure. Pupils learn and play safely. They feel that most pupils behave well and they say that their teachers sort out any concerns quickly. The school's consistently high attendance rates reflect pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils are happy, confident learners.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teaching equips the most able pupils with the advanced reading and mathematical skills needed to achieve the highest standards by the end of Year 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited all classes with you and your deputy headteacher to observe teaching and learning. I spoke with pupils about their work and looked at their books while visiting their classrooms. I also looked separately at a sample of pupils' work and discussed pupils' progress with your English and mathematics leaders. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness and the school improvement plan. I also looked at documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, and the English and mathematics leaders. I also met with five governors. I spoke with a local authority representative by telephone. I considered 83 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day. I also took account of 27 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 64 responses to the pupil questionnaire.