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Mrs Deborah Nind
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Dear Mrs Nind

Short inspection of William Fletcher Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

The number of pupils at the school has risen and there have been changes to the character of the school's intake, reflecting the growth and diversity of housing in the village. You have managed these changes well and have ensured that good outcomes for pupils have been maintained. Parents are overwhelming in their appreciation of the school. As one parent commented, 'My children have flourished and have been very happy at William Fletcher School.'

You and other leaders work together as a strong team. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, outlining clearly the strengths of the school and where further improvements can be made. Governors visit the school regularly and receive comprehensive information from leaders to enable them to both support and challenge effectively. They fulfil their responsibilities well and have kept their knowledge and skills up to date by attending regular training. The governors are ambitious for pupils. They aspire for them to leave William Fletcher as 'happy, confident, well-rounded individuals who achieve the best they can'. As a result of your good leadership, these aspirations are being fulfilled. Pupils achieve well and leave William Fletcher as confident, happy learners.

The school is a purposeful community and pupils are well behaved and courteous.

Children get off to a happy start in the early years and their classrooms are a hive of activity. Children love exploring and investigating for themselves, such as finding out what it feels like when you add water to sand. As one child explained, 'It's all drippy, it's coming through my fingers.' Across the school, relationships are warm and supportive and pupils enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic about the many interesting subjects they study and say that 'there is never a dull moment'. Pupils particularly like the extra activities the school organises, including visits to historical sites such as Avebury and the residential visits for older pupils. They talk with excitement about the challenges they encounter on these visits, like the high-ropes activity on the Year 6 outdoor activities visit.

The school's good work to promote pupils' social and moral understanding is reflected in their mature and sensitive responses to issues such as the plight of refugees. Pupils explain that this work has helped them to be 'more aware of what's going on around the world' and that they have also 'become better people'. Your focus on developing pupils' understanding of equality, respect and tolerance shines through pupils' responses and attitudes. Pupils value each other and explain that 'everyone is equal and everyone is different.' The school council and the pupils' 'rights respecting committee' organise events, such as cake sales, to raise money for different charities. This is helping to develop pupils' leadership skills and sense of responsibility, focusing their thinking on how to help others.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school, including pupils' good achievement and behaviour and the good leadership of the school. Inspectors asked leaders to accelerate pupils' progress by securing a greater proportion of outstanding teaching throughout the school. You have taken effective action to address this area for improvement. Good training, professional development and guidance have strengthened the quality of teaching at the school. You regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' engagement through your visits to classrooms and reviews of pupils' books. You have led the school well through the introduction of the new national curriculum and the new assessment systems. You have improved the early years by refining the way that teachers plan, and the quality of their questioning and prompts to children during child-initiated learning times.

As a result of effective teaching, pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in the early years and key stages 1 and 2. By the end of key stages 1 and 2, pupils achieve standards that are similar to the national average. However, while pupils achieve well in these subjects, the quality and presentation of their work are not as strong in some other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education, as they are in English. You have rightly included the development of the curriculum and subject leadership within your improvement plans for this year. You have also identified the need for a continued focus on improving the attendance of some groups of pupils, particularly those pupils with high rates of absence.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Together with the governors, you keep all aspects of safeguarding under review so that pupils are kept safe and feel safe in school. Your good work to support pupils and their families has been strengthened through the appointment of a family support worker. You also enlist early help for families from a number of different agencies. Record-keeping is systematic. You carefully record any concerns about pupils and, where appropriate, refer these on to other agencies.

Safer recruitment procedures are followed rigorously, including all the necessary pre-employment checks for staff. Timely training means that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are confident in responding to concerns and swiftly referring them to you. Equally, governors are very well informed of safeguarding and have made sure that this aspect of the school's work is always on the agenda.

Pupils at William Fletcher feel safe at school. They know that they can always speak to an adult in school if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet, by following the 'smart' rules and reporting any pop-ups or suspicious emails to an adult. Older pupils have a very good understanding of different aspects of safety, such as how to administer first aid, through taking part in the 'injury minimisation programme'. Every parent who responded to Ofsted's online survey, and all parents spoken to during the inspection, said that their children feel safe at school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, how well the most able pupils are developing their writing skills in English and across the wider curriculum, how well the curriculum and teaching enable all pupils to make good progress across different subjects and how well leaders are addressing the higher rates of persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The most able pupils are making good progress in their writing. Over time, they write with greater control and maturity, use more complex sentences, spell accurately and use a wider range of vocabulary and punctuation. In English, teachers make sure that pupils know all the key ingredients they need in order to be successful writers. They plan many exciting opportunities for pupils to put their writing skills to the test, such as creating 'perilous potions, revolting recipes and magical medicines'.
- Engaging teaching and interesting tasks challenge all pupils, including the most able. For example, pupils could not wait to get started on writing newspaper reports from the point of view of a fairy-tale character. This challenging activity allowed the most able pupils to demonstrate their flair for writing and it also contributed to their understanding of stereotypes. However, while the most able pupils have many opportunities to apply their writing skills in other subjects, their writing is typically not of the same high quality in subjects other than English. In addition, the presentation of some pupils' writing lacks care. This is particularly

the case in pupils' work in history, geography and religious education.

- The vibrant curriculum and good teaching in the early years enable children to get off to a good start in school. Teachers plan interesting learning activities which embrace all aspects of the early years curriculum. Teachers' good-quality observations and records mean that they have a good understanding of children's learning and can plan their next learning steps properly.
- Across key stages 1 and 2, leaders have designed an interesting curriculum that provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to learn in many different subjects. In history, pupils learn how to interpret and infer meaning from pictorial evidence such as aerial photographs of historical settlements. They learn how to sequence events in history and about the differences between life in the past and how we live today. In science, pupils develop their skills as scientists, planning their own experiments to find out about processes such as evaporation and the properties of different materials. Younger pupils learn about the human body and different living things, including animals and their habitats. In geography, pupils learn to identify and name geographical features like mountains and oceans and learn about impact of natural disasters on communities and the environment.
- The curriculum and good teaching also enable pupils to develop their skills and knowledge in art, design and music. Pupils take inspiration from, and reflect on, the work of different artists and cultures to create their own pieces of artwork, such as Syrian tile patterns. In music, pupils learn to play and perform and to appreciate and enjoy music. Last year, older pupils took part in the Oxford Lieder Festival, learning to compose their own songs with guidance from professional musicians. Across the school, the curriculum is enriched through visits to places of interest and extra-curricular activities.
- However, while pupils are making appropriate gains in their learning across a wide range of subjects, many pupils' learning and work are not of the same good quality or depth as in English and mathematics. In addition, sometimes, pupils' work is not presented with care and pupils do not routinely apply the same level of skill that they do in their writing in English.
- Over the past year, you have 'shone a light' on pupils' attendance. You have introduced weekly class attendance awards and individual certificates and have worked with families to improve pupils' attendance. As a result, overall attendance rates are rising and, last year, overall attendance was above the national average. There have also been improvements to the attendance rates of pupils who had previously not attended school regularly. However, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils continue to have higher-than-average rates of absence. Although you are tracking pupils' progress carefully and working hard to improve persistent absence, you recognise that there is still more work to do.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- learning in the broad range of subjects is strengthened, particularly for the most able, so that pupils achieve as well in these subjects as they do in English and mathematics
- pupils' presentation and writing in subjects such as history, geography and religious education are of the same good quality as in English
- attendance rates improve for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

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

Sue Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together, we visited all classes to look at pupils' learning. I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation, including the quality of teaching, outcomes, leadership, pupils' behaviour and attendance. We also met to review safeguarding arrangements.

I held a meeting with three members of the governing body and had a short telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I met with a group of pupils from Years 2 to 6, and spoke to pupils informally during lessons.

I reviewed a wide range of school documents, including the pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, other safeguarding information, curriculum plans, minutes of meetings and policies and documents.

I considered the views of parents through the 35 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and parents' free-text comments. I also met parents on the playground at the start of the school day.