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Mr Stuart McConnachie
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Dear Mr McConnachie

Short inspection of Coldean 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 May 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 lead the school well and bring considerable energy and an individual style to your school and its community. Working alongside your deputy, you have created a strong team of leaders. You and your leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe, enjoy school and have the opportunity to maximise their learning. Notably you have developed the senior leaders and they all care passionately about developing their responsibilities. Their work has resulted in an increase in pupils' progress, particularly for reading and writing. The progress of disadvantaged pupils has strengthened.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and all it does. They appreciate your approach to leadership. Staff, pupils and parents find your friendly, authoritative, fun-filled leadership style refreshing. They know you care for the well-being of all members of the school community, as well as the pupils. They fully support you in your strong stance on diversity and equality, and feel included in your decision-making processes. Pupils enjoy the many different clubs and learning opportunities available. Pupils like school and treat each other with respect. They value each other's differences and make friends easily. Pupils know and use the school's values. They enthusiastically take on roles of responsibility and are proud to be school councillors, school captains, 'e-cadets' and 'peer mentors'. They concentrate well in class and behave well wherever they are in the school.

In 2017, the majority of pupils at the end of Year 6 attained the expected standards in all areas except for mathematics. The larger-than-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieve well, particularly in reading. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in key stage 2 are making good progress, and teachers provide individual support to accelerate learning for this group of pupils in key stage 1.

You rightly identified that not enough pupils were working at greater depth in key stage 1, and in mathematics across the school, and have immediately begun to address this. For example, you would like pupils to acquire mathematical vocabulary and discuss and apply their knowledge to help them develop a greater depth of learning. You also recognise the need for pupils to be more consistently accurate, and confident in their spelling when writing independently. Pupils' current progress is improving due to leaders' careful monitoring, and clear understanding of the attainment and progress performance information. You have used this information effectively to rapidly address pupils' misconceptions and provide additional support for learning.

At the previous inspection reading was identified as a strength, and this has been sustained and remains a feature of the school. The key stage 1 leader has continued to develop the teaching of phonics since the last inspection. Teachers are knowledgeable, lessons are active and pupils enjoy the phonic games and readily join in. During the inspection, younger children were excited to be playing a word game outdoors. Leaders have carefully considered the range of books available in school. They have evaluated how books support pupils' understanding of diversity, equality, enrich their topics and fuel pupils' writing.

You have addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection. Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of mathematics which has been successful in enabling more pupils to reach the expected standard at the end of key stages 1 and 2. Those pupils who have been following the new system longer have made greater progress. This approach to teaching mathematics is now embedded across the school. Pupils use and apply their mathematical skills well in science and topic books where appropriate. Leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff are keen to develop their practice, and the school's current focus on teachers helping each other to improve is having a positive effect. Teachers have good subject knowledge and involve pupils fully in lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that systems for safeguarding are thorough and records are detailed and of high quality. An experienced and knowledgeable safeguarding governor regularly checks the systems and records. Governors monitor e-safety and recently provided parents with a helpful evaluation of effective e-safety training for staff and parents. Staff receive safeguarding training when they join the school and they have regular updates. Adults know how to report any concerns, and an electronic system ensures that all child protection cases are monitored and actions are taken by the appropriate agencies in a timely manner. Leaders recognise that

pupils' attendance is not good enough and persistent absence levels are too high. Although attendance has shown steady improvement over the past four years, it remains below the national average.

The site is secure. Parents and pupils are confident that school is a safe place. They know that any safety issues are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that there is little or no bullying, and that any incidents of bullying are resolved promptly. Pupils confidently use a restorative approach to behaviour. They know which incidents need to be referred to a teacher and which minor matters can be resolved by one of the 'peer mentors'. Pupils understand the need to keep themselves safe online. Pupils are proud to be 'e-cadets' and remind others about keeping themselves safe online.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on safeguarding and attendance; your actions to improve outcomes for pupils in mathematics; challenge for the most able pupils, particularly in key stage 1; and the progress and support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Alongside the hard-working child welfare officer, you have used a range of notification, support and reward systems to improve attendance. Pupils know the importance of attending school regularly and enjoy the recently introduced reward systems, which are starting to have an effect. The importance of attendance is clearly communicated to parents through newsletters. You are vigilant, contact parents and know the individual circumstances of pupils who are persistently absent. However, attendance remains an area for further improvement.
- The mathematics leader is knowledgeable, dynamic and highly effective. She has introduced a new approach to mathematics across the school, effectively training staff, and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, progress in mathematics has improved and pupils are responding well to the new, systematic approach to teaching. Pupils from early years to Year 6 enjoy lessons, want to answer questions and are keen to do well. Teachers teach with energy and enthusiasm, using high-quality questioning to encourage pupils' mathematical reasoning. They are ably supported by teaching assistants who skilfully identify pupils' misconceptions during lessons and provide immediate intervention and support.
- Teachers are addressing the need for pupils to work at greater depth by ensuring that they provide an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers now include challenge during the main teaching input. However, there is limited evidence in pupils' books that they routinely complete the challenges set by teachers. Staff have begun to systematically encourage pupils to use mathematical vocabulary to discuss their work in depth. Early indications are that this is beginning to have a positive effect. However, this needs further development.
- Last year, rates of progress for the most able pupils in key stage 1 were slower than those of pupils elsewhere in the school. The school's assessment information shows that all groups of pupils across key stage 1 are now making at

least expected progress. Pupils' good progress is also clear to see from work in their English and mathematics books. Teachers' well-structured curriculum is contributing effectively to pupils' good progress. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are also making good progress.

- The leadership team has effectively supported teachers' planning for learning through a whole-school approach. The assessment system sets out clear steps for learning and curriculum content in key subjects. This is monitored by both pupils and staff ensuring that every pupil, whatever their ability or need, has the same learning entitlement. While this has supported pupils' overall good progress in English, pupils lack confidence when spelling. As a result, in pupils' independent writing their spelling of common words is not consistently accurate.
- Leaders know their pupils' needs well. Well-structured, carefully monitored individual education plans ensure that the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are met. Pupils make a positive contribution to their plans, and their views are recorded and taken into account when setting new targets. Parents said that the help and support their children have received is 'second to none'. They are delighted with the progress their children are making, and are appreciative of the support that the special educational needs coordinator gives their children. Parents also value the support they receive from the school and are happy to approach the school with any concerns.
- Progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is better at key stage 2 than it is at key stage 1. However, the school is continuing to address and improve pupils' progress through individual plans. Pupils in key stage 1 are also very well integrated into classes. Teachers adapt the curriculum so that these pupils are fully involved and can access all aspects of learning. The special educational needs coordinator has rightly prioritised pupils' speech and language development. She also gives focus to the school's priorities for development so that outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities continue to improve. Where pupils experience difficulties with new learning, effective help is given to them on the same day to quickly resolve any misconceptions. A range of other interventions is provided as required. These are carefully monitored and evaluated so that pupils' learning is maximised.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers give pupils more opportunities for pupils to acquire mathematical vocabulary and apply their knowledge so that they can develop greater depth of learning
- pupils' spelling improves to enable them to confidently and accurately apply their spelling knowledge when writing independently
- leaders continue to improve attendance so that fewer pupils are persistently absent and attendance rises to at least the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Corbett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, the child welfare officer and members of staff from the office team. I held a meeting with two governors and had a discussion with a representative from the local authority. I met a group of pupils and talked to pupils informally during the school day. I visited classes all classes with you and the deputy headteacher to observe teaching and learning. I took into account staff views through the 34 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I considered the views of parents through the 58 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 31 free-text comments. I also spoke to parents before the start of the school day. I analysed a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation; the raising attainment plan; the minutes of governing body meetings; and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.