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Mr Gary Anscombe
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Dear Mr Anscombe

Short inspection of Lunsford 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 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. Since you arrived at the school in April 2016, you have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve. You and your new senior leadership team are particularly effective and respected by parents, pupils and staff. You have an accurate, reflective and honest view of the school's strengths and priorities. You look in detail at what you know about pupils' progress and ask highly pertinent questions of yourselves as leaders about how standards could be even higher. Your plans for improvement are clear because you know what is working well in the school and where things can be even better.

Pupils' outcomes at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 are strong. Results in 2016 and provisional results for 2017 show that the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national averages at the end of both key stages. In 2017, the proportions of key stage 2 pupils reaching the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics are also above the national averages. However, you have identified that the number of pupils working at greater depth in writing at the end of key stage 2 is lower than that in reading and mathematics. Leaders are working to raise standards in writing and have rightly identified the need to improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling in their work.

At the last inspection, the school was asked to increase progress for all pupils.

Provisional results show that, in 2017, the progress made by pupils from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average. However, current pupils are making stronger progress throughout key stage 2.

The school was also asked to develop the outside provision for early years children to enhance their sense of discovery. Leaders have invested in development of this area which is now a bright, exciting provision that enables children in the Reception Year to explore and learn.

You are strongly committed to working with other schools. You play an active role in a number of partnerships. Leaders and teachers value the many opportunities to share ideas, learn from each other and look at pupils' work together to agree assessment judgements about pupils' learning.

You share your vision and enthusiasm effectively with staff, governors and pupils. Teachers talk enthusiastically about the learning opportunities they provide to pupils, and about your encouragement to make learning fun. Recently, for instance, some classes enjoyed a visit from a national bakery as part of their work in design and technology. The bread that was donated as part of that visit was then also used in the early years for children to cut out as part of their work about understanding shape.

Pupils appreciate that everyone at Lunsford School wants them to reach their full potential. One child told me: 'The teachers know what I'm capable of and push me to do my very best.' Another said: 'The teachers encourage me to be my best so that I can get a good job.'

Parents have very high regard for the work of the school. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school. The wealth of positive comments from parents show that they value the culture of 'no ceiling on the expectations for any child'. A number of parents commented on how well their children are supported and enjoy learning. One wrote: 'I feel my children have really been stretched and their own thirst for learning is furthered by the fantastic learning opportunities.'

Governors provide effective challenge and support. They use their time in school effectively to get first-hand information about the things you are improving in the school. Governors value your leadership, are proud of the school's achievements and are ambitious for the school to be even better.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff record concerns diligently because they are attuned to any possible welfare concern. Leaders keep records of all concerns, track every decision they make and log all communication thoroughly.

New staff receive a thorough induction and therefore understand statutory guidance and school policies to keep pupils safe. Leaders ensure that training for all staff is regularly updated. Adults spoken to during the inspection were clear about what they should do if they have any concerns about pupils' welfare.

Pupils receive and understand regular advice about staying safe in different situations. These include, for example, the risks associated with being online. Bullying incidents are rare, but pupils are confident that when they do happen they are dealt with well by teachers. Pupils say they feel safe and that they have trusted adults in school whom they can go to if they have a problem. All parents and staff who responded to online surveys feel that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked at how effectively you addressed low attendance for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, how leaders have developed the outdoor learning provision in the early years, the progress that the most able pupils make in writing across the school, and leaders' and governors' systems to track the difference made by additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- As a result of your concerted and sustained actions, attendance levels for all pupils are now above those found nationally. For example, you have significantly improved the attendance of current disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. You and your family liaison officer work closely with parents, and often with other agencies, to bring about improvement. You access early support for the most vulnerable to ensure that families are able to get their children to school. All staff are alert to patterns of absence that need to be explored or questioned.
- Leaders have created an interesting and stimulating learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, to enable children in the early years to discover and learn together. The recent extension of the outdoor area has provided more space and opportunity for children to explore all areas of the early years curriculum. For example, an outdoor stage encourages language development through drama and role play, and the innovative use of a shed as a 'beach hut' ensures that the children have all-year access to sand play. Teachers adapt planning to suit the interests of the children, such as providing balls for boys who want to count 'keepie uppies'. As a result of these developments, children make good progress in the early years. The number of children achieving a good level of development in 2017 was well above the national average.
- Pupils in key stage 1 attain highly in writing, with provisional outcomes in 2017 well above the national average. However, by the end of key stage 2, pupils do not attain as highly in writing, particularly at a 'greater depth' of understanding, as they do in reading and mathematics. Leaders have clear plans to further improve progress in writing across the school. You have recruited a new subject leader who is also a member of your senior leadership team. Leaders have looked closely at teaching and learning in writing across the school. You have already put a number of useful key initiatives in place. You are allowing extra

time for pupils to write at length on a regular basis, and using quality texts to enhance reading and encourage writing. Leaders and teachers are undergoing training to further develop this. It is too soon to see the impact of these endeavours on raising standards.

- In 2017, pupils at the end of key stage 2 had higher than national average scores in spelling. However, pupils do not always use their knowledge of spelling patterns in their everyday writing in English lessons or across the curriculum. Leaders have identified this through careful monitoring and have plans in place to improve spelling across the school.
- Leaders rigorously track every pupil, including disadvantaged pupils, to monitor progress. Governors meet with senior leaders on a regular basis to discuss the comprehensive tracking information and analysis of the attainment and progress of different groups within the school that you provide. As a result, leaders and governors are able to analyse the impact on progress and attainment of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. You are particularly pleased with the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stages 1 and 2 in 2017, when all pupils in this group reached at least the expected standards in all subjects. Although numbers of pupils in this group were small, it was still a significant improvement on the outcomes for this group of pupils in 2016.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders implement existing plans to improve pupils' spelling in order to raise standards in writing still further
- leaders build on the work already started in writing to ensure that all pupils who have the potential to work at greater depth, or reach high standards by the end of key stage 2, do so.

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

Marcia Goodwin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and a local authority adviser who has worked with you recently. I met with six pupils from Years 1 to 6 and spoke with many other pupils informally. I observed learning across the school jointly with you. I looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke with pupils during lessons. I scrutinised a variety of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its performance, records of checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance. I took account of responses to questionnaires from 39 pupils and 25 staff. I also considered 72 responses from parents to Parent View.