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Mr Matthew Sartin
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Sartin

Short inspection of Springhallow School

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2018 with Kanwaljit Singh, Ofsted inspector, 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.

You, your leaders and governors have successfully managed a significant number of changes since the last inspection. These have included moving to a new building, your appointment as headteacher, and appointing a new chair of governors. You have ensured that all staff, pupils and parents have been actively involved in many of these changes. As a result, everyone is working together to move the school forward and make further improvements. Governors and leaders know the school extremely well and have a robust plan in place to address the issues that you have already identified.

You have begun work to distribute leadership responsibilities more widely. This has helped staff to feel more valued and have greater ownership of the school's work. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about their school and report a sense of pride and belonging. They feel that they have the support of school leaders and that the school is well managed.

You provide a calm, orderly, purposeful and welcoming learning environment that reflects your commitment to making a positive difference for every pupil and their family. Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. They show great respect towards adults and to one another. Pupils conduct themselves very well and understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. Parents are generally pleased with the school. One parent reported that the school is 'not just a school but a family'. Another said that the school is 'the best thing that has happened to my family'.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key focus of the school's work. You develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong and respect diversity. Pupils are proud of their school and most attend regularly. Nevertheless, despite your efforts, a small proportion of pupils continue to be persistently absent. Leaders work closely with families and other agencies to identify underlying issues that prevent pupils from attending, and as a result attendance is improving.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders and governors have established a safe culture that is visible throughout the school. Pupils are able to confidently talk about how to keep themselves safe online and in other aspects of their lives. This is because teachers listen to them, respect them and are well trained. Parents feel that the school provides a safe environment and that the school makes relevant use of outside agencies to support pupils to stay safe out of school. As a result of highly effective support, pupils are able to manage their feelings and emotions exceptionally well.

Safeguarding is delivered across the curriculum and opportunities to respond to current affairs are frequently seized. For example, the gay marriage vote in Australia was identified as a valuable learning experience for older pupils. Pupils are supported to deal with difficult and dangerous situations through role play that includes the safe sabotaging of real-life scenarios. Consequently, pupils who have social and communication barriers are able to cope with independent travel and to access in the local community.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. This inspection focused on pupils' progress, standards of teaching, preparation for the life beyond school and safeguarding.
- Despite the significant changes over the past two years, pupils have continued to make good progress in English, mathematics and personal skills. There is a strong emphasis on developing basic skills and applying them to real-life situations. As a result, many pupils are meeting or exceeding expectations in English and mathematics, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Work to introduce a new assessment system is well under way, and this is driven by your relentless focus on improving pupils' outcomes. Your senior leaders are continuing to refine this system and are working closely with other schools to ensure that teachers' assessments are accurate. This work is not yet fully established. Therefore, senior and middle leaders are not yet able to provide meaningful analysis of data across subjects and groups.
- You, your governors and leaders acknowledge that there is some variation in the standards of teaching and learning across the school. Stronger teaching is characterised by highly effective use of questioning and interesting activities that motivate pupils to learn well. Pupils are generally aware of the standards they are

aiming for and, as a result, demonstrate good progress.

- Middle leaders value observing learning in different subjects. They are clear about how this should be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their own subject areas. Staff feel well supported to develop new skills and experiences. Where you recognise talent, you are keen to develop and support it through training and development. For example, three teaching assistants have successfully trained to become teachers.
- High levels of collaboration, including with therapists, have created a true learning community. One teacher reported: 'All pupils are the responsibility of everyone in the school.' Consequently, all staff work to help pupils make good progress and behave well. However, some teachers do not always provide pupils with activities that deepen and challenge their learning.
- The impact of teaching assistants on supporting learning is typically good, but there is some inconsistency. Most of the time, they play an important role in the class teams by encouraging pupils to behave well and develop good social skills. However, occasionally, class teachers do not brief them sufficiently well to enable them to support pupils effectively.
- Pupils feel well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is helped by programmes such as independent travel, time in mainstream schools and work with specialist agencies. Pupils feel that the work they do is relevant to their lives and will help them with future decisions. One pupil reported: 'We do realistic life skills, not just making fairy cakes.'
- Work to consult and support parents is effective. Parents appreciate the support the school offers and the care staff take of their children. Effective partnership working with careers advice agencies helps parents to make informed choices about the next stage of their child's education.
- You told me that you are keen to develop pupil involvement with key decisions that affect their lives, especially for those pupils who have more complex needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make consistently good or better progress in all subjects
- the use of assessment information is further developed so that staff are able to respond swiftly when pupils require additional help to support their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Francis McDonald-Gonzalez
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, the inspection team held a number of meetings with you and other senior leaders. You accompanied the team inspector on a series of short visits to 11 lessons. The inspection team held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, the curriculum and measuring pupils' progress. Meetings were held with the chair and four other governors, and a group of staff and middle leaders. We also spoke to a group of pupils and we observed an after-school club. The inspection team worked with senior leaders to scrutinise pupils' work and assessment information on pupils' progress. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included self-evaluation, the improvement plan, attendance data, records of pupils' progress and behaviour, and evidence of records to keep pupils safe. The inspection took into consideration 21 responses to the staff survey, 21 responses to the parent survey and a letter from a parent.