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Mr Chris Pearson
Headteacher
Goldstone Primary School
Laburnum Avenue
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Dear Mr Pearson

Short inspection of Goldstone Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2018 with Claire Martin-O'Donoghue, 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 May 2013.

The school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You know your school well. You are honest and realistic about its strengths and areas for development and, with governors, determined that the school always looks to improve. This has led to the maintenance of high standards in reading and writing throughout the school since the last inspection, and recent improvements in mathematics. You are actively supported by your senior leaders, who are ambitious for the school and its pupils. All the staff appreciate your leadership and are proud to be part of the school community.

Parents and carers appreciate your leadership and the inclusive, nurturing environment you have built throughout the school. They see themselves as a part of the whole school community and value all the staff's work. Pupils enjoy creative and interesting lessons. They especially enjoy the educational trips and the wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities available to them, including less common activities such as fencing and ukulele. Pupils are very well behaved, both in lessons and around the school. They have good manners and are respectful towards each other. They relish opportunities to take on responsibilities and take their roles seriously.

For the past three years, an above-average proportion of pupils have attained the expected standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 6. You are carefully monitoring how well disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are doing. These pupils are now making progress in line with school expectations.

You rightly identify that attainment and progress in mathematics are not as strong as those in reading and writing. You have addressed this with the introduction of a new approach and scheme. Although still in its infancy, it is beginning to make a positive difference to pupils' progressive understanding and mastery of mathematics, so standards are improving. However, you recognise the need to continue to focus on mathematics and refine the use of the new approach.

Your commitment to a creative curriculum is at the heart of all you do. Several of your subject leaders are new to their posts. They are enthusiastic, committed and clear regarding the subject skills they expect the pupils to learn. They have begun to track and monitor their subjects, but have yet to make the same impact on learning as that seen in reading, writing and mathematics.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to increase the opportunities for children in the early years to use and apply mathematical skills in their outdoor activities. You have successfully done this. You were also asked to ensure that teaching assistants had a clear focus on learning and responded promptly to pupils' needs. Your teaching assistants are now a strength of the school, particularly those who specialise in particular subjects or provide intervention programmes. Of particular note is the rapid response provided by your learning mentor team, which contributes positively to pupil behaviour and your school ethos.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that systems for safeguarding are thorough. Records are kept meticulously and are of a high quality. You have good relationships with other agencies. You have ensured that key personnel have the capacity to fulfil their duties. Governors understand, monitor and support you with safeguarding, bringing expertise from their professional lives to the school's advantage. Parents have confidence in the school and pupils feel safe.

Your computing leader ensures that there is frequent e-safety training as part of the curriculum. As a result, pupils can confidently talk about how to stay safe online. Parents appreciate the recent training given to them and feel well supported regarding e-safety training for their children. The school site is secure and pupils feel safe. They trust their teachers and are confident that all adults in the school will care for them. Pupils say the incidence of bullying is low, but when it happens a teacher will resolve it swiftly. Parents are complimentary regarding staff responses to their concerns.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on safeguarding and attendance; your actions to improve outcomes for pupils in mathematics; the quality of your curriculum; standards in subjects other than English and mathematics; and whether you have maintained the strength in reading seen at your last inspection.
- Following careful tracking of pupils' attendance, you have introduced rewards for

100% termly attendance. You also send early warning letters and texts to parents when their children's attendance drops below 95%. This has resulted in overall attendance that is above the national average. However, a small group of pupils are still persistently absent. This is mainly due to holidays and long-term sickness. You are doing everything you can to encourage these pupils to attend.

- The introduction and effective implementation of a scheme of work in mathematics has ensured that pupils master skills as they move up through the school. In the early years, good-quality resources foster children's enthusiasm for the subject. Staff have embraced the new system throughout the school and use a good balance of practical and written work to develop solid mathematical foundations in learning. Careful tracking helps to make sure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities get bespoke support to make progress in line with school expectations.
- However, some pupils who work more slowly spend much of their time learning basic mathematical skills. They rarely get on to tackle problem solving or developing their ability to reason. Pupils' work shows that the most able are not always challenged sufficiently; indeed, some pupils say they would like more difficult work during the lessons.
- Your curriculum is exciting. Children greatly enjoy their lessons. You engage children with your creative, practical approach to subjects. The arts are a strength, particularly drawing and painting, where pupils' skills can be seen developing in their sketchbooks. Pupils benefit from specialist music teaching and have many opportunities to perform. Wherever possible, links are made between subjects.
- Your programme of visits and enrichment activities improves pupils' creative writing, which is often better than the expected standard for their age. However, when other subjects are taught within an English lesson, the literacy skills dominate. Pupils are often not clear about what they have learned in subjects such as history and geography.
- Reading has consistently remained a strength since your last inspection, because phonics teaching is precise, targeted and focused. Teachers model sounds clearly and correctly. The dip in phonics outcomes last year has been arrested and pupils are now reading at levels that match their age. Classrooms are rich in displays related to phonics, reading and writing. Reception pupils use their knowledge of phonics well to help their writing.
- Your reading centre continues to provide good-quality interventions to support pupils. The work of the specialist staff in the centre is highly valued by the whole school community. You recognised that the most able disadvantaged pupils needed to make better progress and took effective action. As a result, they are now working at greater depth, because they receive appropriate extra support. Pupils, encouraged to read independently at high levels, rise to the challenge and often choose books that stretch their reading skills. Standards are well above the national average for the majority of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build further on the work already underway in mathematics to extend and challenge the most able pupils, and to be sure that all pupils experience all aspects of learning in mathematics
- when pupils are writing in subjects other than English, the content and skills of that particular subject are more clearly understood by pupils.

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.

Inspectors met with you, your deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, office staff, three governors, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority. We visited classes across the school with you and your deputy to observe teaching and learning. We also considered 39 responses to the staff questionnaire and 288 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. We took into account 151 comments written by parents and one telephone call. We analysed a range of school documents including leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.