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Mrs Jacqueline Martin
Headteacher
Langenhoe Community Primary School and Pre-School
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Dear Mrs Martin

Short inspection of Langenhoe Community Primary School and Pre-School

Following my visit to the school on 22 February 2018, 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Many areas that were identified as strong aspects of the school's work in the previous inspection are still the case. I was impressed by the environment for learning that staff create, with attractive, high-quality displays of pupils' work in the entrance and corridors. A sense of order, tidiness and celebration of pupils' work in the community are very apparent. You have established a strong community school where you, senior leaders and governors are dedicated to ensuring that pupils' well-being and care are paramount.

Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, overwhelmingly agreed that their children were happy, safe and well looked after. One parent summed up the sentiments of many: 'My children are happy, engaged, well nurtured and challenged daily.' Equally, the staff who responded to their online questionnaire were all proud to work at the school and consider it is well led.

Pupils I spoke with were happy and keen to talk about their learning and the many additional after-school clubs that you provide. Pupils enjoy a range of activities, such as tag rugby, football, book club and caring for bees. You place a great deal of importance on pupils developing their personal skills. Pupils regularly visit a local residential home where they build positive relationships with the elderly people and

contribute to their local community.

Pupils are polite and listen attentively in class. School records demonstrate that good behaviour is the norm at Langenhoe Primary School. Any issues are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Attendance has been consistently in line with the national average over a number of years.

In 2016, the proportion of pupils who left the school at key stage 2 reaching the standard expected in reading, writing and mathematics combined was particularly low. You and the governors readily accepted the help and support from the local authority, which provided additional training for governors and staff. As a result, pupils' attainment in key stage 2 was much improved in 2017 and the progress these pupils made was close to that found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leading the school since the previous inspection has not been without its challenges. This academic year, there has been a great deal of staff absence, some of which was unforeseen. This has had a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are currently making, particularly across key stage 1. Some parents mentioned the number of teaching staff that their children have experienced and the unsettling effect this has had. Nonetheless, you and the governors have acted as swiftly as you can and always in the best interest of pupils. In this period of change, pupils remain resilient, enjoy their lessons and are well cared for. Your new permanent teaching arrangements are in place and begin in the summer term. However, the impact on and improvement in pupils' progress in key stage 1 are yet to be demonstrated.

You continue to prioritise some of the areas for improvement that were highlighted in the previous inspection report, such as writing and the achievement of the most able pupils. Currently, you are upgrading your website to continue improving communication with parents and the accessibility of statutory information such as the curriculum. All information to keep the website compliant is readily available.

Governors are dedicated to providing a good quality of education and hold the school leadership team to account for pupils' achievement. Under the guidance of the experienced chair of governors, they have an accurate view of the strengths and current position of the school. Together, you and the governors understand the school's weaknesses and are determined to ensure that pupils make consistent and strong progress in all key stages so that the school remains good at its next full inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at Langenhoe Community Primary School. Child protection concerns are thoughtfully and rigorously followed up. Leaders are well trained and have firm procedures in place to ensure that pupils are safe.

All staff who responded to their online questionnaire stated that pupils are kept safe. Inspection evidence supports this view. You have ensured that all relevant safeguarding training is in place for staff and your meticulously kept records demonstrate that they have received any updates to statutory guidance.

Governors ensure that appropriate recruitment processes and checks are in place and records are accurately maintained. They have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to develop strategies for keeping themselves safe. For example, outside visitors from well-known charities, and regular lessons where pupils consider online safety, are a feature of the school's curriculum. All pupils who responded to their online questionnaire felt safe and could identify an adult they would speak with if they had concerns or worries.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to consider the quality of teaching in mathematics and how well the most able pupils are catered for. This was because in both 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was below that found nationally. The progress the most able pupils made from key stage 1 was also lower than that of other pupils in the class.
- Mathematics is a priority area in your school improvement plan this year. You have a clear rationale for how mathematics is taught and actions are under way to accelerate the progress that pupils make. Mathematics leadership is a strength. The relatively new leader has ensured that staff are well trained and have a strong understanding of teaching mathematics. Consequently, staff have increasingly high expectations of what pupils can do and ensure that most pupils have the opportunity to make good progress in their learning.
- In the books we looked at in upper key stage 2, it was evident that pupils experience a clear sequence of learning activities where they build their mathematical skills effectively over time. Your chosen approach of holding mathematics meetings with pupils is proving successful. The additional adult support pupils receive ensures that misunderstandings are dealt with swiftly and pupils can make the best possible progress. In key stage 2, most pupils are making strong progress over time and evidence from pupils' books supports this view.
- However, the most able pupils, still complete work that does not help them make as much progress as they could. They are not consistently provided with enough opportunities for them to use and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of different ways. Consequently, the most able pupils do not have the chance to produce sufficient evidence of reaching the higher standard by the end of Year 6. Equally, for younger pupils, they do not have enough access to suitable resources and some lose focus during teaching times. This slows the progress these pupils make.
- My second line of enquiry was to consider the progress pupils make across key

stage 1. The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in writing and mathematics in both 2016 and 2017 was lower than when the same cohort left the early years class. I wanted to check whether pupils currently make good progress from their starting points at school in all key stages.

- Children start at Langenhoe with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. Over a number of years, children have left the early years class with a good level of development that is broadly in line with the national average. However, some pupils who achieved a good level of development in reading and mathematics did not make good progress by the end of key stage 1.
- This year, due to staff turbulence and long-term absence, pupils currently are making slower progress in key stage 1. The quality of teaching varies too much and the evidence from their books at this point of the year demonstrates that not enough are working at age-appropriate expectations or above. You are fully aware of the situation and continue to monitor and check the progress pupils are making to ensure that they achieve as well as possible.
- The use of teaching assistants is a strength. They use questioning skills effectively to help pupils explain and focus on learning. Teaching assistants are adept at helping pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. They often effectively instruct small groups or provide suitable one-to-one support in English and mathematics to ensure that pupils' needs are well met.
- My final line of enquiry was to evaluate the provision for groups of pupils in other subjects across the curriculum. I wanted to check how well individual pupils' needs are catered for in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Pupils are provided with a broad curriculum that covers the subjects expected. You have recently changed the assessment processes for subjects across the wider curriculum. Currently, there is not sufficient evidence to show that pupils are making the same rates of progress in subjects such as history, geography and science as they do in English and mathematics.
- From the large number of books we scrutinised together, we found that pupils often complete work of the same difficulty irrespective of their starting points or whether they have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Those who were most-able or who demonstrated a particular aptitude for a subject, for example art or geography, were not provided with further opportunity to demonstrate their skills and understanding so they can excel.
- Pupils show an enjoyment of other subjects and often present their work well, completing activities diligently. However, for some, particularly the most able pupils, the standard of written work they produce in subjects such as history is not the same as in their English work. In key stage 1, the quality of pupils' work in other subjects so far this academic year varies too much and at times lacks a clear purpose.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- swiftly improve the quality of teaching and effective use of assessment in key stage 1
- increase pupils' achievement in key stage 1 in writing and mathematics so that it demonstrates good progress from pupils' individual starting points
- increase the progress the most able pupils make in mathematics so more reach the higher standard by the end of key stage 2
- make sure that the broader curriculum is sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils so more can excel.

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

Yours sincerely

Kim Hall
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the mathematics' leader and three governors, including the chair of governors.

Together, we visited all classes to observe children learning. We evaluated the quality of pupils' achievement through considering work in books across differing abilities and all subjects in the curriculum.

I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school site.

Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.

A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; documents relating to pupils' behaviour; minutes of governor meetings; and governors' records of visits to the school to check the quality of education.

I considered the 47 responses to Parent View and the comments parents made using the online free-text service. I evaluated 7 staff responses and 7 pupil responses to their online questionnaires.