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Miss Alesa Henham  
Headteacher  
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West Sussex  
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Dear Miss Henham

### **Short inspection of Parklands Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Under your determined leadership, Parklands has gone from strength to strength. You and your team have successfully created an inclusive school that celebrates learning and progress for all. Your staff are proud to be part of Parklands. They share your high expectations and work hard to achieve your vision to provide the best possible for your pupils and their families.

Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. The pupils I spoke to told me that they 'love' school because of the fun learning and 'great teachers'. They described a community where everyone knows each other and works well together to support each other's learning. Pupils were, rightly, proud of the work of the special support centre (SSC) and the way that the pupils attending these classes are fully integrated into the wider activities of the school. The school is a vibrant, happy place. Pupils behave very well and are keen to share their achievements, for example, their writing, trumpet-playing and charity work. The relationships in the classrooms are positive and help to create the nurturing and purposeful atmosphere.

Parents and carers are also very happy with the school's work, with many commenting extremely positively on the contribution that the school makes to the local community and the way that every individual is valued. They are also pleased with the way you have ensured that the nurturing culture of the school has been

maintained even though the school has grown in size. One parent commented: 'The school has grown recently but managed to pull off the rare trick of maintaining the feel and atmosphere of a smaller school for both the parents and pupils ... it's not through luck. It's pure hard work from all.'

You have maintained and developed the strengths of the school that were identified in the previous inspection report and achieved the recommendations for improvement. The most able pupils throughout the school are challenged well and are making rapid progress. Teachers have high expectations, and the new strategies to improve pupils' writing support many pupils to make good progress with their writing. The plans to refine this work are well considered and based on close analysis of pupils' progress. You are clear that the improvements seen in writing need to be sustained and developed further so that rapid progress is secured across the school, especially for boys.

Governors are dedicated and proud of all that the school has achieved. They have worked hard to develop their understanding and skills. They look at school information and financial decisions closely. They have held leaders to account for pupil premium and sports funding well and are making sure that this money is making a positive difference for pupils. They are aware that they need to be timelier when updating documentation.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are accurate. There is a clear culture of safeguarding. Staff are trained well and use the school systems effectively so that all small worries about pupils are captured. Leaders use this information well to secure a clear picture about pupils and make good use of external agencies when appropriate.

The governor responsible for safeguarding meets with the designated safeguarding lead regularly to ensure that processes are being followed properly. However, he is aware that it would also be useful to check the single central record as part of this work.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when online. School leaders have worked well with parents in order to help them understand potential risks related to social media and online gaming. Leaders' plans to continue this important work are secure.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I considered how well leaders were supporting pupils to improve their behaviour. This line of enquiry arose from historical information indicating that more fixed-term exclusions had been issued than was typical for primary schools nationally from 2013 to 2016. I found that leaders had addressed this issue extremely successfully. Fixed-term exclusions have not been required or used this academic year. I saw exemplary behaviour throughout the school.

Importantly, pupils, parents and staff confirmed that this behaviour is typical. Leaders attribute this success to the consistent use of the school's behaviour policy by all staff along with the introduction of the new creative curriculum. Pupils enjoy the varied and engaging curriculum and like the way that topics take account of their interests.

- I also looked at how well pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported. I found very strong provision throughout the school and especially in the SSC. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make very good progress from their starting points. Many parents commented on this aspect of the school's work in their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. For example, one parent wrote that: 'Our daughter has blossomed under the care of the fantastic SSC at Parklands – this school is a jewel in the crown of West Sussex.' Another commented that: 'They achieve what I thought was impossible.' Leaders have achieved this success through effective staff training and a clear focus on understanding the needs of each individual pupil. Learning activities and resources are well matched to pupils' needs and these help pupils to make rapid progress.
- I considered how well leaders are improving outcomes for pupils in key stage 1, especially disadvantaged pupils. I found that outcomes are improving as a result of leaders' thorough self-evaluation and their detailed planning for improvement. Leaders have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants are trained and supported well. Teachers plan lessons jointly, and this consistency of approach helps to secure good outcomes for pupils across the school. The progress of current disadvantaged pupils has increased and now matches that of other pupils in the school. However, leaders are aware that pupils' progress in writing is not yet consistently rapid throughout the school, especially for boys. Leaders' information and our joint scrutiny of pupils' work showed variability in this area. Leaders are addressing this, and their well-considered actions are making a difference, although more time is needed for the improvements to be embedded.
- I also explored how well governors are fulfilling their statutory duties and are holding leaders to account. I found that governors know the school well and have worked hard to make sure that they scrutinise leaders' work. Recounts of conversations they have held with leaders show that they are examining leaders' decisions, especially those relating to pupil premium funding. They have also spent considerable time ensuring that they understand the attainment and progress information that leaders present. However, they need to develop their skills further, for example by ensuring that they understand how performance information has been moderated or validated. They are aware that statutory duties relating to the publication of required information should be met in a timely fashion.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors develop their skills in holding leaders to account and ensure that key documentation is updated as scheduled

- leaders continue to refine their work to improve pupils' writing, especially that of boys.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy English  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other members of school staff and members of the governing body. I also spoke with the area improvement adviser from the local authority. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. With school leaders, I visited classes in the school to observe pupils' learning, speak with pupils and look at their books. I spoke with pupils at morning break and at lunchtime and took into account 16 responses to the online pupil survey. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered 75 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 51 written contributions by parents. I also talked to one parent by telephone after the inspection. I spoke with staff and took account of 40 responses to the online staff questionnaire. I also examined a sample of pupils' work. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors, safeguarding and behaviour. I also scrutinised and discussed the school's tracking of pupils' progress and attainment, and the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement.