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Mrs Bridget Hill
Chipping Ongar Primary School
Greensted Road
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Essex
CM5 9LA

Dear Mrs Hill,

Short inspection of Chipping Ongar Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leaders and governors provide clear direction, which creates a strong sense of community and purpose that motivates staff and pupils to achieve well. Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done and provide useful plans to secure improvements. Governors keep themselves well informed, through regular visits to the school and their analysis of leaders' assessment information. Parents and carers and staff alike recognise the good quality of leadership in your school.

The previous inspection identified many strengths, including: the quality of provision and the good start that children make in the early years; mathematics; the knowledge and commitment to improvement demonstrated by your governors; the support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; the wide range of sporting opportunities offered to pupils; spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; and pupils' exemplary behaviour. These all remain strengths.

You continue to offer a broad topic-based curriculum, which interests pupils, allowing them a degree of influence over the direction of their learning. You provide specialist teachers in subjects such as French, physical education and art, which ensures that pupils produce high-quality work. Pupils learn strong subject-specific skills and knowledge in foundation subjects, and science is a strength. Teachers plan lessons which engage pupils. During the inspection, I saw well-planned, challenging and exciting teaching. The school's approach to teaching and learning makes good use of exploring real situations and problems. For example, a Year 4

class wrote articles about the science day which had taken place the day before the inspection, from which a local newspaper will select and publish.

Pupils are articulate, polite and well mannered. Their attitudes to learning are extremely positive. Pupils enjoy their work and talk about their determination to do well. Pupils are motivated by the achievement assemblies and house points. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and exercise democratic choices. They spoke about performing duties, for example as representatives on the school council, junior librarians, managers of the healthy tuck shop and play leaders. Pupils also say that they enjoy the wide range of sports, clubs, trips and special events that are on offer. The school has invested in specialist providers in many instances, for example in dance, music, singing, karate and art. Responses to the pupils' questionnaire reflect the high level of participation in additional activities.

Parents talk of how the school's approach to learning and well-being has helped their children to become more independent and more confident. They appreciate the efforts the school makes to support them in helping their children to learn, through good information and workshops. A number of parents of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities commented on the excellent provision for their children and the rapid progress they are making.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. As the safeguarding lead, you place a high priority on keeping pupils safe and ensure vigilance at all times. You check that records are of a high quality. All staff and governors receive regular training updates and know how to alert leaders to any concerns that they have. Visitors are provided with the necessary information should they have a concern. You work with external agencies effectively to ensure that pupils are kept safe and families are well supported. When there have been concerns, you have been tenacious in following these through. Pre-employment checks on staff and records are comprehensive to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. You take all aspects of health and safety seriously and there is good provision for pupils who have medical needs. Governors make regular checks on all aspects of safeguarding and health and safety. All parents, staff and pupils who completed the online questionnaire felt that their children were safe.

Inspection findings

- In your previous inspection report, inspectors recognised that most pupils were making good progress because of good teaching, but also asked that leaders further challenge pupils and ensure that pupils are taught English and mathematics skills in other subjects. The school has successfully addressed these issues. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in questioning and prompting pupils to order to challenge them. In English and mathematics, lessons include challenge objectives, designed to extend pupils learning. This approach is less developed in other subjects. Teachers provide work which reflects the needs of their class. Lessons are planned so that the most able

pupils do not unnecessarily repeat work and they are offered focused sessions with the teacher in order to extend their learning. Pupils who need extra help are well supported.

- All topics throughout the school have clearly planned key skills which are developing pupils reading, writing and mathematical skills. These skills are, where appropriate, taught explicitly through other subjects. This was clearly evidenced in work in history, geography, design technology and personal, social, health and economic education for example.
- I also considered whether the curriculum and teaching in the school were enabling girls to do as well as they can. This was because, in 2017, at key stage 2, boys achieved considerably higher outcomes than girls and made greater progress than girls across subjects, which is contrary to the national picture. In observing lessons and looking at pupils' work, I found no evidence that girls are making less progress or achieving less than boys. Teachers plan lessons that engage both boys and girls equally. They work well in mixed groups and take part in lessons equally well. Girls I spoke to were as enthusiastic as the boys about their learning. The school curriculum covers well-chosen topics of interest to all pupils. The most recent information about pupils' learning shows that there are no patterns of achievement across year groups or subjects which suggest that girls achieve less well. A school analysis of the 2017 results shows that this was specific to the group of pupils.
- I also considered what actions leaders have taken to improve the progress pupils make in writing between key stages 1 and 2. This is because pupils achieve well in all areas in key stage 1, but in 2017 pupils' attainment in writing at the end of key stage 2 was below the national average. Pupils made less progress in writing than in reading and mathematics in 2016 and 2017. This is despite very strong test results in grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Leaders have successfully implemented a new approach to the teaching of writing. This new approach encourages pupils to craft good-quality writing. Teachers are using materials which really interest the pupils as a starting point for their writing, and this is helping them to write longer, more interesting pieces. Teachers demonstrate what a good piece of writing looks like and how writers select their words and compose their texts. This is helping pupils to understand how to write well themselves. This is now being very closely linked to applying pupils' strong grammar knowledge. As a result, pupils' writing shows strong progress.
- Senior and middle leaders focused on making feedback useful. They regularly check pupils' books to ensure that the schools' feedback policy is being consistently applied. I looked at pupils' writing with leaders and saw that pupils' writing was progressing well as they move through the school. I also saw clear evidence of pupils improving their work as a result of feedback from their teachers and each other. Pupils are keen to improve their writing and present their final writing well. This is evident in the high-quality displays of pupils' writing around the school.
- During the scrutiny of pupils' work, I noticed that, in subjects other than English, pupils have some opportunities to write at length. This is clearly planned

for and writing skills are explicitly taught. Pupils have clear targets for improvement, but they are not referring to them routinely when undertaking extended writing.

- Spelling errors are brought to pupils' notice by teachers, but there is not a consistent policy or approach for teachers' correction of spellings and pupils do not always correct their spelling errors. Some, but not all, teachers are insistent upon the correct spelling of high frequency and key words.
- Finally, I looked at the progress that middle-attaining pupils are making between key stages 1 and 2. This is because, in 2017, middle-attaining pupils at key stage 1 did not attain as well as expected at the end of key stage 2. The school has small numbers of pupils and looks at all pupils individually. Analysis of school assessment information and pupils' work in books shows that pupils across key stage 2 are making good progress, regardless of their key stage 1 starting points. Leaders have taken a highly individualised approach to providing the extra support. You have utilised pupil premium funding well to provide an additional teacher and this, along with other funding made available by governors, is providing a comprehensive programme of well-chosen, focused extra teaching and support for pupils who need extra help. Pupils often have only short-term extra help, as needs are supported early. Leaders are carefully evaluating the accelerated progress that is made by pupils receiving extra support.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Writing continues to improve by:
 - adopting a consistent approach to the correction and teaching of spelling
 - insisting that pupils spell key words correctly in all subjects
 - setting pupils personalised targets for spelling
 - embedding the use of pupils' personalised English targets into written work in foundation subjects
- In all subjects, teachers routinely set learning objectives with success criteria at three levels of difficulty in accordance with school policy.

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

Susan Sutton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders, parents, governors and pupils and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- I visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work. I observed behaviour around the school.
- I reviewed the school's website and documents, including curriculum plans, the single central record, child protection systems, the school's self-evaluation and external evaluations, improvement plans, management monitoring information, and pupil assessments and progress information.
- I took account of the 51 responses by parents, 20 responses from staff and 57 responses from pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaires, as well as 47 comments from parents by text and three letters from parents.