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Mr David Pearson
Headteacher
Sutton-on-Sea Community Primary School
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Dear Mr Pearson

Short inspection of Sutton-on-Sea Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 September 2014.

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.**

You and the deputy headteacher are working together well in order to tackle some areas of the school that currently require improvement. However, we agreed that pupils in key stage 1 are not given frequent enough opportunities to record their mathematical work and the school's curriculum is not broad and balanced. Consequently, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to deepen knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects.

You have detailed and appropriate action plans that clearly outline when actions are to be taken and by whom. Opportunities for members of the governing body to monitor these actions and therefore hold you to account are clear. The well-established governing body is knowledgeable and committed. Individual governors frequently visit the school and meet with school leaders to challenge them appropriately regarding leaders' areas of responsibility. For example, governors attend pupil progress meetings in order to challenge staff regarding the progress pupils are making in English and mathematics.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You were asked to improve pupils' outcomes in writing. As a result, you have successfully worked with an external literacy consultant to ensure

that staff have received appropriate training. This work has ensured that pupils now experience writing for different audiences and are exposed to texts from a wide range of genres. Pupils have improved their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. Consequently, in 2017, the proportion of pupils leaving key stages 1 and 2 who achieved the expected and higher standard in writing rose compared to results in 2016.

There is a calm and harmonious atmosphere in classrooms where pupils are engaged in learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils were enthusiastically writing their own recipes, using the book 'George's Marvellous Medicine' as inspiration. One pupil had written that they would like 'a whole box full of shaving foam and washing powder!' in their recipe. In Year 6, the teacher skilfully explored how pupils had used different strategies to solve mathematical word problems linked to the topic of the Second World War. Classrooms and corridors are bright and stimulating, celebrating pupils' work and with a good range of resources on display to support pupils' learning. However, when we examined pupils' workbooks we concluded that subjects from the wider curriculum are not covered sufficiently. Pupils' knowledge of faiths and cultures different to their own is particularly weak.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are adamant that incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are rare. They told me that they have an adult at school who would help them if they were worried or had a problem. Pupils are knowledgeable regarding keeping themselves safe when online, crossing roads and riding bicycles. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of being lunchtime helpers and junior police community support officers. These pupils help younger children settle any minor disputes during breaktimes. Pupils appreciate the range of rewards they receive in assemblies for a particularly good piece of work or, for example, using their manners.

You have developed an effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The system allows you and the deputy headteacher to analyse the progress made by individuals and different groups of pupils. Pupils' progress is analysed in the frequent meetings you hold with teachers, governors and the leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Consequently, you can quickly identify any pupil who is falling behind and ensure that they receive the help they need to catch up.

In the most recent tests at the end of key stage 2, pupils made broadly average progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their various key stage 1 starting points. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in these subjects was broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved at the higher standard was above the national average in reading and writing. When analysing this information, I took into account a number of pupils who joined Year 6 just prior to the tests being taken.

In the most recent tests at the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national averages. A number of pupils did not make good progress from their starting points at the end of Reception. This was

particularly the case in mathematics.

Inspection evidence and assessment information provided by the deputy headteacher suggest that the majority of current pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are working at the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.

You have an effective system in place to monitor and track pupils whose attendance is causing concern. You communicate frequently with these families and use an education welfare officer to find solutions to sometimes complex situations. You have used a number of strategies to improve pupils' attendance, including rewarding pupils for consistently good or improving attendance and fining parents and carers as a last resort. Despite this robust approach, absence and persistent absence rates are still above the national average. However, they are improving slowly.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. You have an effective system in place for ensuring that the checks made on adults before they begin to work or volunteer at the school meet statutory requirements. You and the staff are trained appropriately in safeguarding and other aspects of pupil welfare, including recognising various signs of abuse.

Safeguarding is a weekly agenda item in staff meetings, where you share local authority safeguarding updates with staff. You and the staff therefore have an up-to-date knowledge of the latest safeguarding guidance.

You have an effective system in place for staff to inform you of any welfare concerns they have regarding a pupil. You act on these concerns appropriately and have good links with outside agencies, including social care, health workers and the police. You ensure that visitors are briefed extensively in your safeguarding procedures and are aware of what to do, for example, should there be a fire.

Inspection findings

- Children in the early years make good progress. The proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development has consistently been above the national average. Transition arrangements before children start school are well established. Information is gathered from local nurseries and from parents. This ensures that staff have a good knowledge of each child before they start in the Reception class. The new online system is effective in recording and tracking the progress made by children. Parents have the opportunity to contribute to this system in order for staff to have up-to-date information and therefore plan carefully for the next steps in a child's learning.
- Pupils in key stage 1 do not have frequent enough opportunities to record their mathematical work. Consequently, teachers do not have an accurate view of pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils are not prepared for the challenges of the

key stage 2 mathematics curriculum.

- Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are not given sufficient opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education. As a result, pupils are not experiencing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils' knowledge in key stages 1 and 2 of faiths and cultures different to their own is limited. Consequently, pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- key stage 1 teachers provide pupils with more frequent opportunities to record mathematical work and carefully plan pupils' next steps, ensuring that pupils are prepared for the key stage 2 mathematics curriculum
- teachers provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects
- pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain by having a better knowledge and understanding of faiths and cultures different to their own.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Stonier
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the leaders responsible for the early years and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the chair of the governing body and a community governor. I also held a telephone conversation with a school improvement adviser who has been brokered to support the school by the local authority. I visited all classrooms with you and examined a range of pupils' books. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and during a group discussion. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, during lunchtime and in lessons.

I took into account the 23 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and 21 responses to Ofsted's free-text service. I considered 13 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire. I examined a range

of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, records of recruitment checks, the latest assessment information for the school, the school's self-evaluation summary and its improvement plan, records of meetings of the governing body and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.