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Mrs Cathy Browne and Mrs Sarah Leyland
Co-Headteachers
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Dear Mrs Cathy Browne and Mrs Sarah Leyland

Short inspection of The Vale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 July 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 lead the school with ambitious determination for all pupils to achieve well. Staff are full of praise for your leadership and feel proud to work at the school. Many parents highlighted the quality of staff as a strength of the school. A parent explained, 'The staff at the Vale are excellent and their caring, friendly and dedicated approach to teaching is what makes the school a wonderful place for children to start their learning journey.'

You know your school and pupils well. Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. You swiftly spotted the dip in standards in mathematics in 2017, and you are taking effective action to get back on track. Your honest and forward-thinking approach is successfully driving improvement in this area. With no sign of complacency, you recognise that there is more work to do to ensure that all pupils make consistently good progress.

Pupils are happy, productive and proud of their school. The school motto, 'Inspiring All', is clearly evident in the way that pupils talk about their work. They say that learning is interesting and fun. Pupils talk eagerly about how they are encouraged to 'dive deeper' into learning, and how this helps them to progress. Pupils value their teachers and the support they receive. They feel that there is a perfect combination of being well cared for, as well as challenged to achieve their best. A pupil summed this up, saying, 'A good school would be nothing without kind teachers.'

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to improve pupils' spelling and ensure that the most able pupils were given suitably challenging work. Phonics is taught well, taking a carefully structured approach across the school. Current pupils in key stage 1 are making strong progress in phonics. Any gaps in knowledge are quickly identified, and appropriate support is put in place. As a result, many pupils proficiently use their phonic knowledge in their writing. Older pupils correctly spell frequently used words in their own writing.

Your careful analysis of pupils' progress allows you to keep a close eye on the achievement of all pupils, including the most able. Current pupils across the school are making good progress and reaching the higher standards. Teachers' strong subject knowledge and skilful questioning encourage the most able pupils to think deeply. Leaders are determined that every minute of learning should be used productively to challenge pupils. Leaders are ambitious for pupils to develop their talents across the curriculum. Pupils successfully participate in arts festivals, quizzes and competitions with other local schools.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that checks on staff are completed thoroughly before they start employment. All staff receive comprehensive training and make good use of this knowledge to keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns when necessary. Leaders respond swiftly and work closely with parents and other agencies.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They know not to talk to people they do not know online. Pupils say that they like the friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the school. They feel confident that staff would help them if they had any worries.

Governors fully understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. They carefully evaluate information gathered from their regular audits and take prompt action when changes are needed.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of leaders' work to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well, how effectively positive behaviour is promoted and how well leaders ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics.
- You have successfully ensured that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is everyone's responsibility. Staff and governors are united in their ambition for disadvantaged pupils to achieve well. Pupils' individual needs are well understood. Thoughtful use of the additional funding ensures that extra support is carefully matched to each pupil's personal needs. Progress is meticulously checked and support promptly adapted if required. Consequently, the school's information

about progress and the work in current pupils' books demonstrate that many disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress from their starting points.

- Positive behaviour is promoted effectively throughout the school. Pupils enthusiastically explained the many opportunities they have to earn rewards for positive behaviour. Many parents, who responded to Ofsted's online survey, praised the way that behaviour is managed. However, there were also a number of parents who raised concerns about behaviour management. Behaviour seen during the inspection in and around the school was calm and orderly. Leaders' careful analysis of behaviour means that support is swiftly put in place when needed, so that positive behaviour is consistently reinforced.
- Some parents also raised concerns about bullying. However, pupils spoken to felt that, while bullying does happen sometimes, it is dealt with effectively by staff. There is clear evidence that leaders' proactive approach is having a positive impact and the number of behaviour incidents is reducing. Leaders have sensible plans in place to improve communication with parents and carers about their continuing work to manage behaviour.
- Leaders have made mathematics a top priority following last year's disappointing key stage 2 results. Since then, there has been a thorough overhaul of the way that mathematics is taught. Helpful staff training is successfully strengthening teachers' confidence and subject knowledge. As a result, pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to solve problems and explain their reasoning. Work in pupils' books and the school's own information shows evidence of current pupils making strong progress from their starting points. Leaders are acutely aware that this work remains a key focus to secure the best outcomes for pupils in mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make consistently strong progress from their starting points in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Prince
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and spoke to governors. I also met with a representative from the local authority. I met with representatives from The Oaks Academy Trust and GLF

(Grow, Learn and Flourish) Schools. Together, you and I visited classes in all year groups. I considered 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 30 free-text comments. There were 27 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I met with a small group of pupils and scrutinised work in pupils' books. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime. I also analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about safeguarding. We discussed your evaluation of the schools' effectiveness.