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Miss Rachel Hately  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Hately

### **Short inspection of Joydens Wood Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 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 June 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. You are successfully stabilising the staff team after a period of significant change. Your staff value the leadership you bring to the school and the improvements you have made. They feel proud to work at the school and recognise the opportunities you give them to develop their practice. Many parents and carers speak positively about the school and say that their children are 'flourishing'. Parents appreciate the variety of events the school provides where they can learn about and share in their children's learning. As one parent commented, 'The headteacher puts the children's best interests first and foremost.'

You know your school and the pupils well. Your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate, and you plan carefully to enable improvements where needed. For example, you swiftly spotted that the teaching of phonics needed a more consistent approach and you have taken effective action to get this back on track.

Like you, governors have high aspirations for the school. They are committed to further improvement and demonstrate a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They expertly offer you appropriate support, as well as holding you firmly to account for pupils' progress.

Pupils are happy, productive and positive about their learning. They work well together and relationships between adults and pupils are strong. Work in pupils'

books shows the high standards of presentation and quantity of work expected of them. They appreciate the school's healthy lunches and the range of extra-curricular activities offered.

You are resolute and unwavering in your vision that all children get off to the best start possible when they join the school. In early years, adults encourage children to explore their interests deeply through play. As one parent of a child in Reception Year explained: 'This style of learning promotes free thinking and encourages children to see learning as something they do, and enjoy, as opposed to something that is done to them.'

Adults build on the children's learning and develop their independence through skilful questioning and the provision of well-thought-through resources. The dynamic leadership of early years has resulted in exceptional practice. This is shared more widely and visitors from many other schools visit to observe and learn from it. Children in early years make rapid progress and the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above that found nationally. Parents say that they feel fully involved in their children's lives at school, with one parent simply saying, 'I love this school'.

As a more cohesive team unifies, you are sensibly looking to further develop the effectiveness of your recently appointed subject and middle leaders. You have ensured that they receive appropriate training and mentoring, which is developing their practice. You have provided them with helpful opportunities to work with other professionals and collaborate with each other. However, as you rightly recognise, the effectiveness of their work is in the early stages of development.

Following the previous inspection, you were asked to provide pupils with clear explanations and instructions, so they know what to do before they start their work. You were also asked to give most-able pupils more opportunities to demonstrate high levels of achievement. Work seen in pupils' books shows that they are successfully able to complete their work. There is evidence that the most able pupils are being challenged through the work they are given in class and their appropriate and targeted next steps.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and accurate. Leaders ensure that checks on staff are completed thoroughly before they start employment. All staff receive comprehensive training and make good use of their knowledge to keep pupils safe. Staff are highly vigilant, reporting any concerns when necessary, and leaders act on these swiftly.

Pupils report that they feel safe at school and parents agree. The school's helpful workshops for parents on e-safety contribute to pupils' strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

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

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the teaching of phonics, the effectiveness of leaders' work to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well, provision for the most able pupils and the wider curriculum.
- Although the proportion of pupils meeting the required standard in the phonics screening check in 2017 rose from the previous year, it remained below that found nationally. You have swiftly addressed this by ensuring that staff are well trained and confident in their teaching of phonics. This has led to a helpfully more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics across the school. Children in early years are developing a good understanding of sounds and letters and are encouraged to write often. Across the school, pupils apply their phonics skills successfully to their writing as well as their reading. As a result, pupils are making strong progress in their reading.
- Thoughtful use of additional funding for the low number of disadvantaged pupils ensures that extra support is matched to pupils' individual needs. Leaders' detailed records for each pupil confirm that their progress is tracked carefully. The school's performance information and pupils' work show that, currently, these pupils are making good progress.
- The attendance of pupils overall, including that of disadvantaged pupils, has dropped this year compared with the same period last year. You and your leaders are rightly redoubling your efforts by working with families and other agencies to help improve attendance overall and for those in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- The most able pupils receive appropriate challenge. In early years, most-able children have many opportunities to deepen and extend their learning in a wide range of areas. In key stage 1, work seen in books confirms that the work they do is not too easy and sufficiently extends their learning. Most-able pupils were confidently able to explain how they write in the first person and how the feedback they receive from teachers helps them know how to improve.
- All groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, develop their knowledge, skills and understanding very well in a wide range of subjects. There are many opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English. Themed weeks, such as 'enterprise week', develop pupils' understanding of mathematics and business. Investigative skills in science are developed particularly well and pupils regularly plan and carry out interesting scientific experiments. Art is a strength of the school, with pupils, for example, making good use of the 'studio space' in the early years area. Pupils enjoy specialist music teaching and opportunities to sing in the school choir at local events.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' attendance improves, overall and for disadvantaged pupils
- leadership and management improves by developing middle and subject leaders' effectiveness in developing teaching and the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Frances Nation  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and governors. Together, you and I visited classrooms to observe learning. I scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance and pupils' progress. I met with children from the Reception Year, and pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 and heard them read. I looked at a wide range of pupils' work with middle leaders. I considered 36 responses to the online pupil survey, 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 69 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 38 free-text comments. I also spoke with a number of parents.