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Mr Neil Taggart
Ingatestone and Fryerning Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School
The Furlongs
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Dear Mr Taggart

Short inspection of Ingatestone and Fryerning Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 9 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 September 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 leadership team and governors have an accurate view of the school and provide clear direction and effective planning. You have high expectations, and this provides a strong sense of purpose, which motivates staff and pupils to achieve well. Parents and carers and staff alike recognise the good quality of leadership in your school.

You and your staff have created a warm and welcoming school where all pupils' academic and personal development is equally important. Your staff know pupils and their families well. This, together with the high priority given to supporting pupils' personal development and welfare, continues to be a key strength of your school. Learning support assistants offer effective support for pupils they work with, both academically and socially. Parents are overwhelmingly positive and expressed appreciation for the support given to their children, particularly those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

The previous Ofsted inspection identified many strengths, which you have built on. These include teachers' planning, their clear expectations, the good outcomes which pupils achieve and your close links with the community and other schools. You continue to ensure that a broad topic-based curriculum keeps your pupils interested and motivated. For example, pupils studying a novel set in South America made short films about their topic and models of artefacts related to the sun god and studied the geography of the journey undertaken by the characters in the novel.

Pupils are enthusiastic about opportunities that enrich their learning, such as a language trip to France and a residential outdoor pursuits trip. They participate in an extremely wide range of sports and clubs, for example lacrosse, cheerleading, drama, chess, Spanish and cookery. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They take great pride in contributing to the school community and exercising democratic choices. Some pupils talked about their responsibilities as heads of house, school councillors, junior librarians, members of the religious education (RE) focus group, class monitors and many more. During the inspection, a class of Year 3 pupils organised and performed an assembly about France, covering history, tourism and songs, and enacting short scenes in French.

Pupils are articulate and express their views and opinions confidently. Their attitudes to learning are highly positive. This can be seen in their willingness to work together, their diligence in class and the good quality of presentation in books, which inspectors had asked you to improve in the previous inspection report.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You ensure that all necessary checks are made on all staff prior to their taking up appointments. Records are complete and up to date. Staff and governors undertake regular and relevant training. Any concerns about pupils are raised immediately. Although rare, when there has been the need, staff have worked closely with other professionals, such as health and family support workers, to make sure that pupils are safe and well supported.

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. Parents and staff who completed Ofsted's online questionnaires overwhelmingly agreed that pupils are kept safe.

Pupils reported feeling very safe in your school. They said that bullying almost never occurs and, if it does, is rapidly dealt with. They have a good awareness of when they may be at risk in a range of situations and of how to manage this effectively. Pupils understand well how to take effective precautions when they are using the internet and know who to speak to if they are concerned.

Inspection findings

- In the previous inspection report, the school was asked to ensure that more-able pupils are challenged. Outcomes and progress in the school dipped in 2016, recovering in 2017 with attainment again above the national average. Progress of middle-attaining pupils was weaker than for others in 2017. Therefore, I looked at whether the strong progress of more-able pupils is being maintained and whether middle-attaining pupils are now making stronger progress. Analysis of school assessment information and work in pupils' books suggest that, in 2018, Year 6 outcomes are likely to surpass 2017 outcomes. A greater proportion

of pupils are working above age-related expectations and securing good progress in English and mathematics. Leaders check the accuracy of their assessments with external partners.

- Leaders are making sharper use of assessment information to ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs in English and mathematics. Teachers' assessments are discussed regularly. Pupils who have gaps in their knowledge receive additional teaching at an early stage. Pupils and parents talked about the positive effects of this personalised approach, including for the most able pupils.
- Governors have provided additional resources so that in Years 5 and 6 some classes are smaller in English and mathematics, and work can be closely matched to the needs of the pupils. Staff have received training on setting challenge tasks and are applying this consistently, although with varying degrees of effectiveness. There is, however, considerable expertise in mathematics, as the school has taken a leading role locally in developing high-level mathematics teaching.
- The next area that I looked into was the use of pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for the small number of disadvantaged pupils. Over the past two years, no pupils in this group achieved higher levels in end of key stage 2 assessments, and their progress was below that of other pupils nationally in all subjects. During the inspection, I observed each of these pupils in their lessons and looked at every pupil's books. Books show that disadvantaged pupils are making as much progress as others with the same starting points, and observations showed that they engage well in their learning.
- Leaders, teachers and learning support assistants are fully aware of all the disadvantaged pupils. This results in detailed personalised plans for every pupil. A designated governor monitors these closely. Funding is used in a variety of ways to support pupils academically and socially and to enable high levels of participation in wider learning activities. School assessment information shows that, as a result, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. Most are meeting age-related expectations in their attainment as a minimum by the time they reach the end of Year 6. The school has clearly identified the most able disadvantaged pupils, and some are working above age-related expectations.
- Concerted efforts by staff to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils have had a positive impact, and attendance is now close to the national average.
- Finally, you asked me to look at the work your leaders have been developing to strengthen leadership and progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. Subject leaders said that there are now clear expectations of their roles and that these are more strategic. They articulate this well, demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm and take full responsibility for developing their subjects. There is a strong sense of team collaboration. Middle leaders plan together, and there is generally a good level of consistency across classes.
- Governors have made resources available to ensure that new middle leaders have the development they need, both in school and through external training. The school makes good use of links with a local secondary school to support subject development. Leaders value this development and said that they are now

more confident in their duties. Time is given for them to properly discharge these responsibilities. Subject leaders have worked together to ensure that expectations are the same across subjects and to map where extended writing is best practised.

- Leaders have been trained to make use of assessment information in their subjects to inform planning. In some cases, this is used to identify where there is a need for additional support or challenge. However, this is not consistent. The matching of work to pupils' needs is less precise in some subjects than in others. This information is not yet brought together to enable pupils' performance across subjects to be looked at.
- Teachers in a range of lessons, for example in physical education (PE), art, history, RE, computing and French, demonstrate strong subject knowledge and insist on the use of correct subject vocabulary. Teachers' planning skilfully relates work to the curriculum topic, enabling pupils to make strong links and build on what they know. As a result, pupils' work shows that they are making good progress across the curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers and subject leaders make use of current assessment information in all subjects to ensure that work is always well matched to the different needs of pupils
- teachers and subject leaders draw on expert practice in mathematics to challenge pupils at all levels in foundation subjects
- subject leaders use assessment information strategically to gain a picture of pupils' learning needs across the whole curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Chelmsford, 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.
- I visited all the classrooms, looked at pupils' work and observed

behaviour around the school.

- I reviewed a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, the single central record of employment checks, health and safety information, child protection systems, pupil assessment and progress information and attendance information.
- I took account of the 68 responses by parents, 18 responses by staff and 67 responses by pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaires as well as 66 comments from parents by text.