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Mr Andrew Shore
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Dear Mr Shore

Short inspection of Foxhills Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection.

You provide inspirational leadership. You lead with resolve and, in partnership with your skilled deputy, have established a culture where staff and governors share your ambitious vision for the school. Pupils and staff work with determination to meet your high expectations. As a result, you have created a very happy school in which pupils thrive and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education. Parents and carers appreciate your work and that of your staff, with one commenting: 'Mr Shore is an amazing headteacher and has made significant improvements to the school. The teaching team is brilliant.' All parents I spoke to, as well as the very large majority of those who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agree that their children are happy and safe at school. One comment typified the view of many, 'Our children love their school and are very proud and happy to be part of it.'

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their very good attendance. They work with enthusiasm and are very proud of their achievements. Pupils talk

animatedly about the projects which make up the exciting, rich curriculum. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's 'CLEAR' values of 'care, learn, enjoy, achieve, reflect'. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school exemplifies these values; they are polite, confident young people who show high levels of respect and very positive attitudes to their learning.

Middle leaders are highly skilled and work very effectively as a united team. They receive excellent training and contribute fully to school improvement. They are very committed and have a deep understanding of their responsibilities. They make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and give timely, well-received support to staff when needed.

Governance is strong. Governors are committed, skilled and rigorous in their duties. They have a very accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Governors make frequent visits to the school to find out how policies work in everyday practice. They are supportive of school leaders and provide rigorous challenge.

When the school was last inspected, leaders were asked to ensure that teachers make the best use of assessment information to match the needs of groups of pupils, including the most able. You have been relentless in your determination to ensure that pupils benefit from well-planned lessons with activities which provide appropriate challenge. As a result, standards have risen significantly since the previous inspection. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was nearly 20% higher than the national figure. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards in reading and mathematics were significantly above the national averages. However, you are not complacent. You rightly identify that there is more to be done to make sure that pupils have more opportunity to explain their mathematical ideas and deepen further their understanding and reasoning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors, rightly, make safeguarding their top priority. They make sure that all statutory duties are carried out well. Policies and procedures are up to date and link closely to the school's values. Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors. All staff and governors receive timely training, and updates are included on every weekly staff meeting agenda. As a result, staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and understand what they need to do in order to keep children safe.

Pupils told me that they feel very safe in school. They are entirely confident that adults would help them if they had any worries or concerns. They explained how much they value 'bubble time', which ensures that they are listened to if needed. Relationships across the school are strong. These help to create a nurturing, harmonious atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and valued.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to focus on the following aspects: the achievement of disadvantaged pupils; how effectively leaders responded to the 2017 writing results; and the progress that pupils make in mathematics across the school.
- In 2017, too few disadvantaged pupils reached the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. You have taken swift, highly effective action to address this. You have made sure that additional funding is used exceptionally well to ensure that good-quality, tailored support is provided where needed. Leaders are relentless in their monitoring of the impact of this support. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' progress has improved rapidly.
- Work in pupils' books, as well as the school's assessment information, shows that more disadvantaged pupils are working at the higher standards than in previous years. For example, in Year 6, more than a third of these pupils are working at the higher standards in writing and mathematics, and more than half are working at the higher standard in reading. These pupils have made rapid progress from their starting points.
- Although the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in writing in 2017 was higher than the national average, you were disappointed that the proportion who reached greater depth was not better than average. You recognised that pupils were not consistently developing accurate spelling. You lost no time in taking firm action to tackle this and introduced a new system to teach spelling. The positive impact of this is seen in pupils' books. Pupils are now developing a secure understanding of spelling rules and apply these appropriately in their written work.
- The vibrant, exciting curriculum provides high-quality opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills, develop their ideas and reach the higher standards. Pupils in Year 6 delighted in telling me about their writing that was inspired by reading 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'. Pupils in Year 3 enjoyed explaining how they were using their scientific knowledge to write a diary of a bee. The teaching of writing is a significant strength of the school and pupils make rapid progress.
- In 2017, pupils' exceptional progress in mathematics placed the school in the top 20% of all schools nationally. The proportions of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards were significantly above the national averages. Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making equally strong progress. Pupils quickly acquire mathematical skills and apply these skills well to solve problems. Pupils told me that they enjoy mathematics and the high level of challenge that their teachers give them. Leaders are taking appropriate action to improve pupils' ability to explain their reasoning in mathematics, but this is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning in mathematics so that they deepen further their understanding.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Toulson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher and your middle leaders. I also met five representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I spent most of the day with you or your deputy, visiting classrooms, talking to pupils and looking at their work. I met with a group of pupils to talk about their learning and to capture their views of school life. I took account of the 94 responses by parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 90 free-text responses and a letter from a parent. I also spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. I looked at a range of documentation, including an evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's single central record of staff recruitment checks, an evaluation of the effectiveness of governance, attendance information and minutes of governing body meetings.