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Mrs Sarah Harding  
Headteacher  
Kewstoke Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Harding

### **Short inspection of Kewstoke Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 7 June 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 January 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Governors describe your leadership as 'aspirational' and describe you as someone who 'is focused on the right areas and not afraid to make changes when things don't work'. You have high expectations of yourself, your staff and pupils. You work tirelessly with passion and enthusiasm. Staff are supportive and share your vision for the school to be even better. Nevertheless, you do not shy away from tackling underperformance when teaching does not meet your high expectations. This means that pupils receive a high-quality education.

Since starting in post two years ago you have shown determination and rigour to tackle the areas identified as needing improvement at the previous inspection. For example, work has been undertaken to increase pupils' confidence in mathematics. This means they are able to apply their knowledge and understanding successfully in their work. In addition, there are increased opportunities for pupils to practise their spelling and incorporate more complex sentences in their writing across the curriculum. However, you are acutely aware of the areas for improvement. You and your governors know that provision in the early years is not yet strong enough to enable children to make the very best progress. Furthermore, you know that more pupils could achieve the higher standards, especially the middle-attaining and most able pupils, in writing and mathematics. Leaders' actions to tackle these areas are proving successful and pupils typically make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but you agree that further work is required.

The school's values, 'mutual trust' and 'respect for all', shine throughout the school. During the inspection pupils were happy, smiling and keen to learn. Pupils spoken to confirm that this is typical in their school, a view eloquently summed up by one pupil who told me, 'The headteacher is very protective of the school and children; she treats us like her own children, a massive family.'

The overwhelming majority of parents are highly supportive of the school. Typically, those who responded to the online survey or spoke to me state that their children are well looked after, taught well, behave well and that the school is well led and managed. 'Kewstoke is a hidden gem and children get a fabulous start', 'I have nothing but praise for this school' and 'The school is absolutely amazing' are just three of the positive comments made by parents.

At the start of the inspection, we agreed on the key lines of enquiry to be considered during the day. These included: how the school ensures that pupils are safe, behave well and attend school regularly; the effectiveness of leaders in ensuring that children make good progress in the early years provision; the effectiveness of teaching to enable middle-attainers in key stage 1 to make good progress; and the effectiveness of teaching in key stage 2 to enable pupils, especially the most able, to make good progress, particularly in mathematics. These key lines of enquiry are considered below in 'Safeguarding' and 'Inspection findings'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's policies and procedures to ensure that pupils are well protected are in place. Records are detailed and of high quality. All staff, including governors, undertake training in child protection. Staff are well trained in how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation, and from the influence of radical or extreme views. As a result, staff are confident in the action to take if they spot any concerns about the safety of a pupil.

You and your governors are fully aware of the importance of safer recruitment. This means that staff are carefully vetted prior to starting employment in the school.

You view safeguarding as 'everyone's business' and there is a whole-school approach to minimise risk to pupils. As a result of the school's diligence, most parents spoken to or who responded via Parent View, are confident their children are safe in school, summed up by one parent as 'an intimate and caring environment'. Pupils describe how they feel safe in school because of the kind and caring staff. They know how to keep safe, including in the use of electronic equipment, and in not approaching people they don't know. This was exemplified by a child in the Reception class who wished to view my ID card to ensure that it was safe to talk to me.

### **Inspection findings**

- Behaviour of pupils in school is good. Pupils quickly learn the difference between right and wrong. The behaviour policy is consistently applied by staff and pupils.

This was exemplified in the early years class. Children responded immediately when the teacher asked them to stop what they were doing. As a result, no time was wasted in children moving on to the next activity, a physical education lesson. Pupils told me that behaviour in school is good. They explained that while there are disagreements, these are sorted quickly by staff. They welcome the opportunity to share any worries or concerns they may have through the use of the 'worry box'. They are adamant that bullying is extremely rare and that when it happens it is rapidly sorted.

- The overall attendance of pupils is just below the national average. Leaders acknowledge that this needs to improve. Leaders carefully analyse attendance and pupils' progress. This shows that those pupils who do not attend school regularly do not achieve as well as they could, because their learning is hampered by their absences.
- The proportion of children in the early years achieving a good level of development continues to fluctuate and is currently below the national average, especially in reading and writing. This is because planned learning activities do not precisely meet the needs of the children. Leaders are aware of these weaknesses and are working closely with staff to tackle them quickly. Early indications show improvements in provision and outcomes. For example, children were enjoying their writing about what was in their treasure chest. They were able to read me the short sentences they had written, with confidence and enthusiasm. Nevertheless, more work needs to be done to ensure that children make consistently good progress.
- Overall, pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of strong teaching and learning activities meeting the needs of pupils. The modifications made to the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and outcomes. Pupils are more enthused by their learning. For example, they were excited in the launch of their new topic which is based on the book 'Flotsam'. They listened carefully to the story read by the teacher and were eager to answer questions on what they had heard. Current progress information shows further improvements in reading, writing and mathematics for most pupils.
- The teaching of English and mathematics in key stage 2 is good overall. Typically, teachers have high expectations and pupils make strong progress over time. You have ensured that staff have high-quality professional development and training to hone their subject knowledge and skills. For example, there has been a strong focus on pupils' fluency and skills in mathematics to enable them to apply their learning to more complex problem-solving activities. In one class visited, pupils were eager to talk to me about their learning in solving algebraic questions. This they did with aplomb, clearly demonstrating their knowledge and application of number.
- Overall, while outcomes are strong in key stages 1 and 2, you know that increasing the number of pupils achieving the higher standards in writing and mathematics is a key area for development, especially for middle-attaining and most-able pupils.
- You, your leaders and governors had already identified that the presentation of

pupils' work is not good enough, which leads them to making errors. I agree. You need to tackle this quickly to eliminate the errors that pupils make and to encourage them to take increased pride in their work.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in the early years provision is more precisely matched to the individual needs of children
- teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, so that more pupils, especially the middle-attaining and most-able pupils in key stage 1 and 2, attain above the expected standards in writing and mathematics
- the presentation of pupils' work quickly improves
- there is a continued focus on improving the attendance of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Jen Southall  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I held meetings with you, subject leaders, including the early years leader, a group of governors and pupils. I also had a telephone conversation with your school improvement partner. I made visits with you to lessons in all classes to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to view their work. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work since the previous inspection, including safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. I took into account 15 responses to the Ofsted online survey Parent View, and 14 text messages written by parents. I also considered the views of parents gathered at the start of the day. I reviewed the five responses to the staff questionnaire.