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15 June 2018

Sonia Longstaff-Bishop  
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Dear Mrs Longstaff-Bishop

### **Short inspection of The Mark Way School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2018 with Jenny Boyd Ofsted Inspector, 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 May 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 lead the school with determination to see all pupils engage in the best possible learning. This is exemplified by the aspirational targets, high expectations and bespoke planning for each pupil, which enables them to feel confident and make positive decisions about their future. This results in pupils going on to appropriate destinations when they leave school. You are supported ably by your senior leaders, who share your vision. They are equally dedicated to improving the life chances of all your pupils. All of the staff who responded to the staff survey said that they are proud to work at the school. As a result of your firm commitment to children's well-being, pupils are supported effectively and thrive at Mark Way School.

Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. They show confidence in the support that they receive from staff. This enables them to engage in work that is carefully tailored to their needs. Pupils settle quickly into lessons and contribute positively. Working relationships between staff and pupils are very positive, as is the manner in which they work with each other. Pupils show others high levels of respect at almost all times. On the small number of occasions where behaviour does not match the high standards expected, staff skilfully support pupils to resolve

problems. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the provision at the school. They feel that it is well led and helps their children to excel.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection successfully. The curriculum is now broad and balanced, built around the needs of pupils. Alongside subjects such as English, mathematics and science, pupils take part in practical and vocational lessons, including horticulture and sports leadership. Leaders and staff track pupils' progress accurately and put in place highly effective interventions to address specific needs. One example is the focus given to reading, with all pupils making strong progress over time. Leaders recognise the need to extend these successful approaches to the further development of numeracy across the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet statutory requirements. The single central record details accurately the robust employment checks that leaders carry out when recruiting new staff. Adults are trained appropriately in all areas of child protection and know what actions to take to keep pupils safe from harm. The school works effectively with other agencies to make sure that pupils receive any additional care that they need to be safe.

You and your staff show a strong commitment to pupils' well-being. This includes teaching them the importance of healthy relationships. For example, pupils learned about the impact these can have on those around them by offering stability, love, kindness and support. On the few occasions that bullying occurs, pupils feel that it is taken seriously and dealt with effectively. They understand what to do if they need help and feel safe and confident to do so.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders' effective action has led to a sharp rise in pupils' attendance. High expectations to attend school are upheld, and staff with key responsibilities challenge absence rigorously. Regular attendance has a high profile throughout the school. Good and improving attendance is celebrated in a range of ways, including certificates in assembly. On the occasions that pupils do not attend school, staff work determinedly to find out why they are not in, and to establish where they are. Pupils, parents and carers respond well to this high level of care.
- Leaders' analysis of academic and pastoral data is highly effective in ensuring that pupils' rapid progress is sustained. Leaders communicate the relevant information very effectively to all staff so that learning activities are planned well and match the needs of the pupils. Where the need for further support is identified, specific interventions, particularly to improve reading, are put in place. These contribute to pupils' strong progress. Leaders have identified the need to adopt these successful interventions in numeracy.
- Pastoral support is exceptionally effective. Its clear and consistent focus on positive behaviour, values and reflection supports pupils to understand and

moderate their own behaviour choices. Social time such as break and lunchtime is well managed, safe and engaging. Pupils enjoy interacting with each other positively and make thoughtful choices about what they would like to do during this time. In and out of lessons, pupils show tolerance and acceptance of each other's needs and enjoy celebrating each other's successes. Relationships across the school are very strong and an atmosphere of trust flourishes that supports pupils' self-esteem and well-being.

- Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum. They have planned learning carefully in order to ensure that all pupils can access the highest possible levels of challenge while always showing sensitivity to pupils' specific needs. As a result, pupils gain in confidence and are able to access a range of subjects. Leaders have extended the wider curriculum through the effective delivery of a diverse range of subjects and courses. These rich experiences support pupils to find success and develop resilience.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- current good practice in literacy is extended to the development of numeracy across the school.

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

Gary Tostevin  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

My colleague and I observed teaching and learning in all areas of the school. Most observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. We held meetings with you, senior leaders, teachers and support staff. Additionally, I met with two governors and had a telephone discussion with the chair of governors and a local authority representative. We scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of school performance, school policy, safeguarding records, records of attendance and behaviour and information about pupils' progress. We spoke to pupils during the school day, in and out of lessons. We also took into account 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and five responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to a sample of parents by telephone.