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4 September 2018

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Dear Mrs Hall

Short inspection of Fairfield Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 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 October 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 a quiet determination. You have a passion for every child's right to a high-quality education and you and your staff nurture pupils to succeed. In lessons, pupils are attentive and focused so that no time is wasted. The curriculum inspires and enthuses pupils. Consequently, they are keen to attend school. One pupil told me, 'I love learning!' Pupils are kind to each other, play fairly and manage relationships well. The positive culture you have created reflects the school's motto, 'Everyone is valued and learning is fun'.

Staff are highly committed to their roles and recognise the improvements made since the school's previous inspection. They are committed to continually improving their professional practice, supportive of your vision and proud to be members of staff. Staff are good role models for pupils. For example, during social time, staff demonstrated to pupils how to take turns.

Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Attainment in reading, writing and phonics has improved over time to be in line with national averages. An increasing proportion of pupils achieve above expectations. Attainment in mathematics, while also improving, is slightly lower because of weaknesses in pupils' reasoning skill. There are also some weaknesses in pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Governors are knowledgeable and determined. They support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors visit the school often to gather first-hand evidence so that they can hold leaders to account well. The local authority provides useful additional support.

A minority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed concerns about the school. However, the vast majority of parents are very happy with the quality of education their children receive. All the parents I spoke to were positive about the care and education that the school provides. One parent said that, this year, her child's progress had 'come on in leaps and bounds'. Another parent praised the care the school offers by telling me, 'When my son gets nervous, they give him a little responsibility. He loves it!'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding procedures are effective. They make sure that staff fully understand the regular training they receive. Leaders make thorough checks on the suitability of adults to work with children. Governors are well trained and have a clear understanding of their role in keeping children safe. They are diligent in checking the robustness of the school's policies and procedures.

Pupils feel safe in school. They said that there is no bullying but, if there was, they would know what to do to make sure that it stopped. The pupils I spoke with could identify an adult whom they would tell if they had any worries. Playground monitors from Year 2 support their peers and younger pupils to play safely and resolve any minor friendship issues. Pupils are taught about safety in the curriculum. They know how to use resources sensibly. For example, in Reception, children are encouraged to work as a team to pack away resources safely.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on: behaviour and attendance; the provision for pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; the effectiveness of phonics teaching in improving reading and writing; the impact of middle leaders on the curriculum and outcomes; how well leaders meet the needs of the most able pupils; and standards in mathematics.
- Since joining the school, you have implemented a comprehensive and effective behaviour policy. This is understood well by pupils. Staff follow the behaviour policy with care and attention. Pupils respond positively to rewards. For example, the 'animal adoption centre' is a particularly popular reward. Leaders have provided individually tailored support to the small number of pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour. This has been effective in helping these pupils to develop their social skills and work successfully with their classmates.
- Last year, attendance was below the national average. You have made sure that pupils come to school more regularly. You have met with families to ensure that they understand why regular attendance is important. As a result, pupils'

attendance has improved so that it now broadly matches the national average.

- Governors have ensured that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been spent effectively. Leaders carefully measure the success of a range of strategies. They use the funding well to engage pupils and their families in exciting learning. Teachers use their precise and accurate assessment of pupils' understanding to plan specific activities for individuals. As a result, by the end of key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils' attainment is similar to that of other pupils nationally.
- You have improved the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Additional training for staff ensures that adults have a more precise understanding of how to meet these pupils' needs. Leaders have improved the way they monitor pupils' progress. Increasingly, teachers use pupils' progress information effectively so that their planning meets the needs of pupils. Plans to further improve how information about pupils' progress is reported to parents are well judged.
- The previous inspection report asked the school to improve outcomes in phonics. You identified that some children join the school with underdeveloped speech and language skills. You, rightly, prioritised improving the teaching of phonics to make sure that this weakness did not prevent pupils making good progress in reading and writing. The impact of strong phonics teaching is evident in pupils' work across the school. In Reception, children learn the sounds that letters make and key words in practical and fun ways. For example, children wrote words in chalk on the playground and practised reading them as they scrubbed them out, acting as school caretakers. There remain weaknesses in pupils' speaking and listening skills, which hamper them in expressing themselves clearly. This contributes to pupils' difficulties with reasoning skills in mathematics. You have clearly identified this and have made improving speaking, listening and reasoning ongoing priorities.
- Increasingly, reading is a strength. In key stage 1 and Reception, pupils are keen to read. They choose reading over other practical activities. Leaders engage families with their children's reading well, for example by providing book boxes so that all pupils can have access to books at home. Most-able pupils are challenged to achieve high standards.
- Teachers inspire pupils to write by creating stimulating activities which grab their attention. For example, in Year 1, after finding an 'alien' had left slime over their tables, pupils were determined to write clearly so that an alien understood about life on earth. Teachers make sure that pupils check the accuracy of their work carefully. One pupil told me that, to make her writing better, she remembers to 'look out for full stops, capital letters, phonics and I use interesting words'. Expectations of what all pupils can achieve have risen and, because of this, pupils show a good standard of writing. For example, this was evident in history work about Neil Armstrong and in science work on the diary of a growing bean.
- Over time, middle leaders have developed their skills well. They understand the importance of improving teaching through careful monitoring. Middle leaders use

support and advice from the local authority and from other schools effectively.

- Teachers have underpinned changes to their teaching by raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Most-able pupils are now swiftly challenged in lessons so that they are stretched effectively by their work. Pupils enjoy this level of challenge. A pupil in Year 2 told me: 'Sometimes the work is hard and sometimes it is easier. I prefer it when it is trickier.' As a result of increased challenge, pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents are pleased with these increased expectations.
- In mathematics, pupils achieve broadly average standards at the end of key stage 1. The most able make accelerated progress. Pupils are able to manipulate numbers well but find it harder to explain their reasoning. This limits their ability to progress more rapidly. Leaders have already identified this as an area for development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics are strengthened so that their attainment improves
- pupils' speaking and listening skills improve throughout 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

Linda Appleby
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior and middle leaders and nine governors. I also met with a representative from the local authority. Together, you and I observed learning in eight classes. I scrutinised a range of pupils' work. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' outcomes, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I considered 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. I met with 10 pupils from Reception to Year 2 and gathered the views of other pupils throughout the day.