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Ms A Naismith
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Naismith

Short inspection of Abingdon Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. With strong support from your senior leadership, you track pupils' progress accurately and use this information to put into place effective plans to improve the school further. There is a strong sense of teamwork and good staff morale. The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. A trained specialist provides extra support for identified pupils and you work with leaders at other schools to develop learning in mathematics. You have also taken steps to involve the children in making the curriculum more creative and analysing how they learn most effectively. This enthuses the children in their learning.

Governors have a range of suitable skills and experience. They take their responsibilities very seriously. Such skills help the governing body to discharge its duties in, for example, finance. Governors analyse the detailed information about pupils' achievement you give to them. They know the school well and challenge you considerably.

Parents and carers who spoke with me during the inspection were positive about the learning in the school. One comment included: 'My child has had the best education, taught by fantastic teachers. She has been given a wide variety of opportunities throughout her time at Abingdon. She has been given support and encouragement so that she achieves her potential.'

Behaviour in lessons was calm and purposeful. Pupils told me that they enjoy the 'super learning weeks', such as art week. Pupils said, 'We focus on one subject and really

improve our work.' Pupils spoken to would all recommend the school. One comment summed up the many positive ones: 'Teachers are kind and deal with issues straight away. Everyone accepts new pupils into the Abingdon family. We accept each other whatever we are like.'

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve aspects of reading. Your actions have been effective. Pupils in class show good comprehension and fluency skills. Pupils told me they read a wide variety of books and enjoy reading for pleasure. Younger pupils use their phonics well in lessons to help them to read unfamiliar words. As a result of recent improvements, staff develop pupils' reading skills through carefully planned reading activities. Consequently, current pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' attitudes in lessons and their conduct around the school are good. They work hard in lessons. Well-thought-out activities give pupils opportunities to discuss learning in depth, ensuring that they are actively involved in their learning. This also deepens their learning and understanding while they demonstrate resilience and respect towards each other.

During the inspection, we discussed the next steps required to enable the school to improve further. Leaders' own evaluation accurately highlights that further work is required to ensure that the most able pupils achieve the highest standards in writing at key stage 2. Additionally, there is still much to do to improve attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Regular checks ensure that records are maintained to a good standard, including those relating to staff vetting and recruitment. Staff and governor training is up to date. Alongside your pastoral manager and learning mentor, you work effectively with agencies to secure, when appropriate, specific support for pupils and their families.

A minority of parents expressed concern through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, about some aspects of safety. However, pupils told me that the majority of pupils are well behaved and that bullying is rare. Pupils spoken to say that they feel safe because staff will help them and resolve any issues they have. There has been work across the curriculum regarding safety. Pupils recognise that staff keep them safe by teaching them how to stay safe on the internet and outside school.

Inspection findings

- We agreed several areas of enquiry for this inspection. The first of these was the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders to improve outcomes in writing. As a result of training for staff, in collaboration with the local authority, teachers understand what skills pupils need to improve. Teachers create opportunities for pupils to write at length in English lessons and to practise their skills in subjects across the curriculum. The English subject leaders have implemented a number of changes that ensure that pupils make good progress. These include a strategy that has helped pupils to improve their use of grammar and punctuation. Pupils' improved sentence formation and punctuation are adding interest to their writing. As a result of these changes, current pupils make

good progress. However, the impact of these changes has not been seen in the proportion of pupils achieving the highest standards at key stage 2.

- The next area we looked at was the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders to improve outcomes across early years and key stage 1, particularly in the case of disadvantaged pupils. In the Reception class, staff challenge children, particularly in their learning outdoors, demonstrating high expectations of their work. Staff provide activities that are practical and structured and which capture children's interests. There were examples of good-quality written work in the early years, with the most able children using capital letters and full stops.
- In key stage 1, pupils make good progress from their varied starting points. A greater proportion of pupils are achieving the pass mark in the phonics screening check. Progress in mathematics across key stage 1 is strong for all ability groups. Pupils have opportunities to explain what they think and staff quickly identify and address errors and misconceptions. Staff monitor the progress of pupils carefully. They then use the information they gather to focus their teaching on the best way to meet individual pupils' needs. As a result, progress across a wide range of subjects is good.
- Leaders are also working hard to accelerate the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. A good range of social, emotional and academic support is in place. You monitor the progress and achievements of disadvantaged pupils. You ensure that all pupils receive support to meet their needs and review this frequently, adapting it if needed. Evidence from pupils' books and from assessment information shows that current pupils' progress in this group is strong across key stage 1.
- Attendance is a high priority for the school and you have systems in place for monitoring attendance and for tracking those pupils that are not attending school regularly. Evidence provided demonstrates how you and members of the governing body act to improve attendance. You follow up in detail those pupils who are late or persistently absent. You reward pupils for regular attendance and also hold parents to account where a pupil's attendance is low. Despite this, absence is currently above the national average, as is persistent absence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils absent and persistently absent from school continues to decrease
- they embed the changes made to the teaching of writing so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher standards at key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I held meetings with you and I also spoke with senior staff to discuss improvements in their areas of responsibility. Alongside you, I looked at learning in pupils' books. I also spoke to the local authority adviser.

I reviewed documentation, which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and the school development plan. I spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered 40 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered 63 responses to the school's own pupil questionnaire and 29 responses to the school's staff questionnaire.

I visited classes, together with you, to observe pupils' learning. I met with one governor to discuss aspects of school leadership and management. I reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.