

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Jo Ibbotson  
Headteacher  
The Grove Primary School  
Chobham Road  
Frimley  
Camberley  
Surrey  
GU16 8PG

Dear Mrs Ibbotson

### **Short inspection of The Grove Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 October 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You became the headteacher in April 2018, bringing with you a clear direction for the school. Since then, you have appointed other senior leaders. Together you have built upon the school's many strengths and identified ambitious priorities to improve pupils' progress further. Leaders and governors say that you have clearly communicated these priorities, and they are now being implemented.

Although a few parents remain anxious following an unsettled period of leadership, their confidence in the school is growing. A large majority of parents welcome the many ways you have found to communicate with them. Typical of many parents' views was the comment, 'I feel, with all the new staff, the school is now going in the right direction.'

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly school and they readily help each other out. One summed up the school's caring ethos by saying, 'If you look around, everyone has someone. There is no one on their own.' Pupils work hard in their lessons, listen to teachers and each other, and behave well. Their good behaviour supports them to make strong progress. Pupils respect and trust their teachers, and say that they are kind and helpful.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement that inspectors identified at the last inspection. They asked the school to ensure that teachers provide more challenge for the most able pupils, especially in key stage 1. In recent

years the most able pupils have made strong progress to attain the higher standards at the end of both key stages 1 and 2, although some of them did not do so well in 2018. You and your deputy rigorously check the progress of all pupils to discuss with teachers how to support each pupil to achieve their best. You are determined that, where pupils are falling behind what you expect of them, you will provide the support they need to catch up.

Your pupils bring a rich resource of diverse backgrounds and abilities to the school. Their different needs are met well by your talented staff team. The school has a higher than usual number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including some who are placed in the school's resource provision, 'The Link'. During visits to classrooms, and at breaktimes, I observed how effectively your school includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They make good progress from their individual starting points to develop confidence and independence in their learning.

Our classroom visits confirmed that pupils typically work in line with teachers' expectations for their year groups. Reception children are adept at using numbers in their role play, such as when buying vegetables for dinner. They practise addition skills successfully, such as when the adult remembered 'one more person for dinner'. A sample of Year 2 mathematics books showed that, since September, pupils have made strong progress to understand different ways to calculate with increasingly high numbers. In Year 6, pupils have had many opportunities to explain their mathematical thinking, which has deepened their understanding. I saw in English lessons and in pupils' workbooks that, across the school, teaching helps pupils to edit and improve their writing. Teachers challenge pupils to apply their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling to improve their work. Teaching also helps pupils to increase their understanding of vocabulary and to consider its effect on someone reading their work. Pupils' reading development presents a more varied picture of provision and progress. Leaders are taking action to improve some aspects of the teaching of reading.

You have prepared some very clear plans for improving the school. You rightly place a high priority on staff training and you are working alongside leaders in order to develop their skills. However, there has not yet been enough time to implement fully your professional development plans. You and your governing body know that the impact of the school's revised approaches will need to be evaluated over time to be sure that they are making a positive difference to pupils' outcomes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have developed a team of designated leaders who share a deep level of commitment to work with all staff and governors to keep pupils safe from harm. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff have received comprehensive training to recognise any concerns, and they know what to do. You work well with parents and other agencies, identifying early support for pupils and their families wherever possible.

Governors and the academy trust ensure that staff and volunteer recruitment checks are thorough. As a result of a recent review, leaders have enhanced their procedures to ensure that visitor access to the school site is secure.

Pupils say that they feel safe when they are in school and that they learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils in key stage 2 were able to tell me rules for using technology safely. They understand that there are different sorts of bullying, and that it is about repeated incidents that cause a person to feel threatened. They were emphatic that there is hardly any bullying in the school. Pupils assured me that they can easily talk to an adult about any concern, however minor it might be.

## **Inspection findings**

- The inspection focused on three specific areas that you had already identified as improvement priorities. I was interested to find out whether there is any early impact on the quality of teaching and learning arising from the school's actions. I worked with you to look at: how pupils develop reading skills as they move through the school; how effectively the school uses additional monies to ensure that disadvantaged pupils do well; and pupils' achievement in some of the subjects across the wider curriculum.
- You have wisely identified actions to improve pupils' reading by reviewing the outcomes of previous year groups. The majority of pupils have made good progress from their starting points but relatively few of the lower-ability pupils have caught up to age-related expectations by the end of Year 6. Leaders are aware that, for some pupils, teaching has not consistently developed pupils' comprehension skills to match their ability to read texts. Consequently, fewer pupils develop their skills in reading, in order to meet the demands of the key stage 2 curriculum, than in writing and mathematics.
- Training is in place for teachers to extend the ways in which pupils investigate and understand their reading. You are promoting pupils' greater enjoyment of reading, including by extending the school's stock of good-quality reading material. Pupils appreciate that they can order any book they like and that the school will buy it in immediately. You have effective plans in place that aim to increase rates of progress and raise attainment and are checking that revised approaches are making a difference to pupils' learning.
- In recent years, the school's strategy for using additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been carefully evaluated. Historic information shows that there have been differences in attainment from all pupils nationally. You have wasted no time in analysing where and why there are barriers to learning for this group of pupils. Your current strategy plans to address, as early as possible, the barriers you have identified. Consequently, the school is using additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively.
- Pupil-level information shows that they are currently making good progress. This was confirmed by the work I saw in pupils' workbooks. Where individual pupils have fallen behind but can catch up, they have extra help, such as by involving their family, reducing absence, or through additional teaching, including through developing pupils' reading. When we visited classrooms together, I saw many

occasions when teaching support staff helped pupils to practise their basic skills.

- When you arrived at the school, you recognised that the curriculum needed further work to support pupils' overall development and progress. You have achieved much in a short space of time, improving provision for French, physical education and sport, by appointing dedicated teaching staff. You worked with leaders to plan curricular links between and across subjects where possible. Topics are carefully chosen to maintain a clear focus on developing pupils' knowledge and skills so that they deepen their understanding.
- The school's curriculum currently engages pupils well, and we saw interesting learning taking place across a range of subjects. Pupils enthusiastically told me what they are learning, and they have good recall of important information. For example, in a history lesson Year 5 pupils told me about the Viking raids in Lindisfarne. When we visited Year 6, we observed pupils using what they know of Britain during the Second World War to consider what life might have been like for people after the war ended. Year 2 pupils rose to the challenge of being an astronaut to find and annotate physical and human features on aerial photographs.
- Teachers make effective links with English and mathematics, supporting pupils to apply skills in meaningful ways that extend their learning. In science, pupils spend more time on investigating, and ably record their learning. There are also imaginative opportunities, such as for Year 5 to visit a museum and then create their own museum at school. Pupils say, however, that there is too little art. You agree with their view and recognise the need for subject development. Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular clubs that are on offer. I saw a few lunchtime clubs that particularly support pupils who have additional needs, such as the 'miles of smiles' project in the playground. The key stage 1 choir enjoyed singing, while impressively using Makaton signing as a means to communicate.
- Subject leaders are developing their skills by working with senior leaders. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They work well with their counterparts in other schools within the trust to strengthen practice and consider pupils' progression, such as in science. Subject leaders are influencing increasingly effective classroom practice and are keen to lead by example. You are aware that your middle leaders need further development. They are developing their skills to evaluate the impact of their leadership on pupils' improving progress throughout the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the teaching of reading comprehension, so that attainment in reading is higher at the end of Year 6
- subject leaders further develop their roles to become increasingly effective in supporting school improvement

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, chair of the board of

trustees and the chief executive officer of the Kite Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Surrey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and your deputy to discuss the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. I held discussions with a group of subject leaders, members of the local governing body and the Kite Academy Trust. Together, we observed learning in every year group. I talked to pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of books for pupils in Years 2, 4 and 6. I talked to pupils at playtime about their experience of school and met with a small group of key stage 2 pupils. I reviewed the school's website and associated documents. I read the minutes of governing body meetings. I saw evidence of how you check pupils' progress and attainment, and how school staff maintain safeguarding records. I met with parents in the playground before school and considered 50 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 32 free-text comments. I considered 34 responses to the staff survey.