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10 December 2018

Miss Rona Mackie  
Headteacher  
Guildford Grove Primary School  
Southway  
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Dear Miss Mackie

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

Following my visit to the school on 27 November 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 January 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since becoming headteacher in 2014, you have developed the school, building on the strengths created by previous leaders, by providing exciting learning opportunities for pupils so they progress well in all subjects. There is a sense of pride, with all staff sharing the vision and purpose of making the school the best it can be. Parents are highly positive and this is reflected in the comment made by one parent, who wrote: 'This is a lovely school and I couldn't be happier. The teachers are approachable and create interesting and exciting lessons that my daughter is excited to tell me about after school.'

Undoubtedly, one of the school's many strengths is the passionate leadership that all leaders bring to their roles. They work closely together and so have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where further improvements may be made. You have implemented a structured programme of professional development that encourages staff at all levels to reflect upon and develop their skills. Consequently, teaching is consistently lively and engaging, helping pupils to progress well across the school. You support the development of leaders by allowing less experienced staff to prepare themselves to become future leaders. In this way, you have created a sustainable model of leadership which has strong capacity to improve the school further.

You and your leadership team are outward-looking and research new ideas thoroughly before implementing them. You have established very effective working relationships with the Guildford Educational Partnership (GEP) since the school

became part of this multi-academy trust in 2016. You and other staff visit other schools to learn from each other and share skills and talents to secure further improvements. As a result, actions taken to improve the school have been highly effective.

Senior leaders have high expectations and this is reflected in the quality of the school's environment. There are vibrant displays of pupils' work in corridors and classrooms. These show work that is of high quality in many subjects. This has created a calm and purposeful learning environment in which all pupils feel safe and valued. You have established a culture which is fully inclusive and one in which all pupils, regardless of background, are warmly welcomed. Pupils love their school and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and the exemplary behaviour seen around the school. Pupils get on very well together and relish learning about the world in which they live.

You have successfully tackled the key issues identified when your predecessor school was last inspected. You have increased the proportions of pupils who reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Work in pupils' books shows that there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to write extensively across a range of different subjects, including mathematics and art. However, you are aware that more needs to be done to improve the quality of pupils' writing. You also know that a very few teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils act on the helpful comments made about their work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. All staff have received high-quality training to help them recognise the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Records are kept electronically so that leaders can build a picture of concerns and act quickly, should it be necessary. Leaders ensure that all adults who work in, or visit, the school are checked for their suitability to work with pupils. Leaders are diligent about following up concerns so pupils and their families get the right support in a timely way. All records are very well maintained and fit for purpose.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They say that all adults understand their needs and intervene quickly should a problem arise. Pupils learn about bullying through activities such as those they recently took part in during the school's anti-bullying week. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with rapidly. They know about staying safe when using technology and that it is unsafe to communicate with strangers when using the internet. Through locally sponsored schemes, such as Junior Citizenship, pupils are taught how to stay safe outside school.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this short inspection, I focused especially on:
  - the extent to which pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, achieve as well as they should

- the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in English, across the school
  - how effectively the curriculum promotes opportunities for pupils to write across a range of subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils as well as those with SEND are suitably challenged in school and make good progress. Work in pupils' books shows that both groups of pupils are making rapid gains in their learning and are on course to meet their challenging targets. The school's own information shows that a substantial number of disadvantaged pupils have additional barriers that prevent them from attaining similar standards to their classmates. The special needs coordinator works alongside teachers to create support packages to help these pupils to access learning within classrooms. In many classes, highly trained teaching assistants work alongside pupils, carefully breaking learning down into small steps so pupils understand what they are expected to do. Some pupils who have more complex needs are provided with special programmes of work. These are designed to address their particular needs so that they can later join in with the learning activities provided for other pupils.
- Teaching is consistently effective across the school allowing pupils to progress well in reading, writing and mathematics. In classrooms, teachers ensure that language-rich displays help to tackle the weak language and communication skills shown by some pupils. Teachers are skilled at checking pupils' learning and moving them on quickly when they are ready. Teachers ask questions that make pupils work hard. Teachers' questioning also builds on pupils' responses to extend their learning. Pupils progress well because teachers plan work that meets their different learning needs. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong and inspire pupils to engage positively in lessons and behave well.
- Teachers typically use imaginative methods including animations and high-quality books and texts to stimulate pupils and inspire them to learn. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, the teacher showed pupils a video clip of penguins moving about on the ice. She introduced words such as 'huddled' and 'scrambled' and explored the meaning of these with pupils, enriching their vocabulary. Pupils were thoroughly engaged while also developing vocabulary to help them to write about the lives of penguins. Often, pupils are provided with colourful prompts that act as reminders about how they may organise their thoughts to structure their writing. Pupils learn by sharing ideas with partners or by listening carefully to whole-class discussion. As a result, they have a lot to write about and develop the fluency and confidence to express their ideas.
- Pupils have extensive opportunities to write at length in all subjects. Much of this links to high-quality books that feature in all classrooms. For example, pupils in Year 6 were writing about different aspects of 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens. This gave them clear insight into aspects of life in Victorian times. In Year 2, pupils were learning about the Wars of the Roses. The teacher brought learning to life by showing them an animation video clip of one of the battles. Prior to this, the teacher asked pupils to listen to the video clip carefully to think of some questions they would like to ask. There was a real buzz in the classroom as pupils discussed and shared their ideas in preparation for writing.

- Pupils across the school have made good progress in developing their writing skills but there remains a legacy of weak basic skills. Although pupils construct sentences well, showing fluency and confidence when expressing their ideas, some pupils do not spell or punctuate their work accurately and their handwriting is not as neat as it should be. This is something leaders are addressing but they know that more needs to be done. Most teachers adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy by ensuring that pupils act on the good-quality advice they provide to help the pupils to improve their work. However, there are a few teachers who do not consistently follow the policy and this slows the progress pupils make.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils spell and punctuate their writing accurately and present their work to a high standard
- all teachers implement the school's marking and feedback policy by giving pupils opportunities to respond to their helpful comments.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-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

Joy Considine  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection, I visited six classrooms with you to see how well pupils were learning. I met with you and several members of your leadership team. I met with four governors and three members of the GEP. I looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to pupils informally in the playground at lunchtime. I scrutinised a variety of information, including: your plans for improvement; the school's own records of pupils' learning and progress; and minutes of the local governing body's meetings. I looked at information relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance and documentation showing how the school keeps pupils safe. I considered the views of parents by analysing 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 26 free-text comments.