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Ms Rachel Simmonds  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Simmonds

### **Short inspection of West Blatchington Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 2019, 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 February 2015.

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

You lead the school with energy and are totally committed to providing the best for all pupils, no matter what their background. Your high aspirations are replicated by staff at all levels. Parents and carers told me they love the inclusive feel of the school. One told me: 'All are welcome at "West Blatch". We wouldn't want it any other way.'

My visits to classrooms enabled me to see first hand the many strengths in teaching and learning. Most pupils were deeply engaged in learning. This included pupils from the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils were happy to talk to me about their work. Most understood clearly what they were learning and why. Their books showed a good range of work and confirmed your own opinion that most pupils, including those from vulnerable groups, are making good progress in a range of subjects. This includes subjects such as art and French, where pupils' books gave me clear evidence of progress, because teachers have high expectations.

Despite our shared concerns about rates of absence, it is clear that pupils love coming to school. My discussions with pupils in classrooms, at breaktime and when I talked to a representative group were all extremely positive. Pupils are proud of their school, although they are looking forward to moving into the new building, hopefully in April. They told me about how they enjoy learning about new things, and how friendly West Blatchington is, especially to 'new children with different languages'. They told me that everyone cares, for example, if someone falls over, and that, 'Teachers don't get angry when you can't do your work well enough.'

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors acknowledged the many strengths of the school. These included the decisive action of leaders to improve the quality of teaching. Inspectors also acknowledged that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with SEND were doing well at the school. However, they also recognised that achievement in mathematics was not as strong as it was in reading and writing, and that, on occasion, expectations and aspirations were not always high enough. These matters have been addressed successfully. Outcomes in mathematics broadly match those in reading and writing. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Aspirations are even higher and underpin the very inclusive ethos of the school.

Since the last inspection, you have continued the important process of self-evaluation. You were able to explain to me clearly the school's many strengths, as well as the key priorities for improvement. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds make good progress across the school. This is especially the case in the early years and key stage 1, where their outcomes match those of other pupils nationally. However, despite making good progress overall, the achievements of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 still do not match those of other pupils nationally. We also agreed that, despite falling levels of overall absence, persistent absence, especially of pupils from vulnerable groups, still needs to be reduced significantly.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Arrangements to safeguard pupils are effective. Leaders have instilled a culture where safeguarding and the protection of children are given the highest priority. As a result, staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have safeguarding concerns. Staff and governors have attended appropriate training. Day-to-day systems to ensure the safety of pupils are sound.

All parents who spoke to me feel that their children are safe at school. All parents who replied to Ofsted's parent survey were positive about the safety of their children in school. Pupils told me that they feel safe in school because staff care for them well and quickly address any concerns they might have.

### **Inspection findings**

- The school's curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Leaders have ensured that staff maintain an appropriate balance of subjects throughout each year group across the school. Subject leadership is well established. Middle leaders are expected to keep track of what is being covered and when. They are also involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. As a result, pupils' books show a good range of work, including in science and subjects other than mathematics and English.
- Music, which is taught by a specialist teacher, has a high profile in the school. Pupils enjoy their music lessons. Singing assemblies are happy and creative occasions where pupils experience the joy of singing together.
- Pupils enjoy an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport.

Trips out of school to enrich pupils' learning and understanding of different aspects of their topic work are normal. Sport and activity clubs before, during, and after school are greatly enjoyed by pupils. An annual residential trip focusing on outdoor adventurous activities is available for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

- Pupils' social and emotional development is supported well by the curriculum. Their understanding of British values is strong, because all aspects of day-to-day school life promote the school's culture of tolerance, respect and equality. Pupils know about rules and laws to keep people safe. They also have a highly developed sense of fairness and know about the cultures and faiths of others.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do well, because leaders have made their outcomes a high priority. This is partly due to the much higher proportions of disadvantaged pupils in the school than in most other primary schools. Also, importantly, leaders have a clear understanding of the potential barriers to learning these pupils have and are determined to overcome them.
- Academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils over time are good. Many start school at levels below those typical for their age. Due to the good quality of teaching in the early years and key stage 1, outcomes by the end of Year 2 match those of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In spite of disadvantaged pupils making good progress overall through key stage 2, their outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are still not as strong as those for other pupils nationally.
- Despite leaders' many initiatives to improve attendance, rates of persistent absence are still too high. This is particularly the case for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Clearer evaluations of the impact of leaders' different actions to improve attendance will enable them to focus resources more effectively in their ongoing work to reduce persistent absence.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- increase the progress of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2, so that their outcomes improve to match, or better, those of other pupils nationally
- reduce rates of absence, particularly persistent absence, especially of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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

Yours sincerely

Clive Close  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I visited classrooms, assessing the progress that pupils were making and talking to them about their learning. I observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, at the start of the school day, at breaktime, and as they moved around the school. I met with you and other leaders, two governors, teachers and non-teaching support staff, and also with a group of pupils. I talked to parents at the start of the school day and took into account 69 replies to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire and accompanying text messages. I met with a representative of the local authority. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised. This included: safeguarding records; pupils' progress information; the school's self-evaluation; improvement planning; policies; minutes of governing body meetings; and notes of a visit from the local authority.