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Mrs Sue Harratt
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Dear Mrs Harratt

Short inspection of Chartridge Combined School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your deputy headteacher provide effective leadership for the school. You have set high expectations and are aspirational for your pupils. Through careful monitoring you have ensured that you have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. This has enabled you to focus your school improvement work in the right areas. You are making the improvements needed and ensuring that pupils continue to learn well. The vast majority of parents and carers who expressed a view were very positive about the work of the school.

You have established a positive climate for learning and a nurturing ethos throughout the school that is supported by strong relationships between staff and pupils. One parent said, 'The school harnesses the children's potential and is nurturing in its ethos.' As a result, pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They are polite, friendly and welcoming. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, are confident and work with high levels of concentration, particularly in key stage 2. They know what they need to do to improve in their learning and they are committed to making those improvements. For example, one child told me that he was working particularly hard to improve his handwriting so that he would earn his 'pen licence'.

At the time of the previous inspection you were asked to ensure that pupils in key

stage 1 and children in the early years were fully challenged in their learning. You were also asked to improve outcomes in writing so that they match those in mathematics and reading. You have successfully improved outcomes in key stage 1 over the last three years. In 2017 and 2018 the proportions of pupils who attained the expected standard and who reached greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics were above national averages. You have also secured improvements in writing. The rates of progress that pupils make in writing have been in line with the national averages for the last three years. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 has been above the national averages for the last three years. You have, however, quite rightly identified that improving outcomes in writing remains a priority for the school, and have taken further steps to address this by, for example, introducing new strategies for the teaching of spelling. This is because, despite the improvements made, the rates of progress that pupils make in writing in key stage 2 do not yet match those in mathematics and reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your deputy headteacher have ensured that pupils' welfare is a priority in the school and have established clear policies and effective procedures to keep pupils safe. All of the required checks are completed on the suitability of adults working in school and these are recorded efficiently on the single central register. You provide regular, thorough training for all staff so that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that their teachers help them if they have any worries or concerns. They say that bullying is very rare but that when it does occur teachers are very quick to deal with it and it is resolved effectively. Parents are confident that the school takes good care of their children. One parent said that the children are 'safe, very well looked after and happy'.

Inspection findings

- In addition to checking safeguarding arrangements, I focused on the following aspects of the school's work: how well teaching builds on pupils' writing skills in key stages 1 and 2; the effectiveness of teaching in helping pupils to make the best possible progress in the early years; and how effectively governors check on the use of additional funding to support outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- As a result of the actions you have taken to improve outcomes in writing, current pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are making strong progress from their starting points. Pupils write with increasing stamina and with greater confidence in a range of styles and in different subjects. The strategies that you have introduced, to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and their varied use of language, have been highly effective. Pupils present their work carefully, with neat handwriting, and apply a wide range of vocabulary to make their writing interesting. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their writing and are committed to doing so.

- Following a two-year declining trend in attainment for children in the early years, you have taken steps to improve the quality of provision in the early years, in particular in the use of the outdoor area. In 2018 the proportion of children who reached a good level of development increased so that it was in line with the national average. You have rightly acknowledged, however, that there is still work to do to ensure that children make the progress of which they are capable.
- There remains some variability in the quality of teaching and learning in the early years. Some activities are planned effectively to support children's learning and successfully engage children's interest and enthusiasm. At other times, however, the activities planned lack a clear purpose. When this happens, children do not engage in their tasks for sustained periods of time, becoming quickly distracted and losing interest. As a result, some children do not make as much progress as they could.
- Your governors are committed to raising aspirations and delivering the best possible outcomes for pupils. They provide an effective balance of support and challenge for school leaders to ensure that outcomes continue to improve. Governors do not, however, have an accurate understanding of how the school's pupil premium funding has been spent, or what impact this funding has had on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. While most disadvantaged pupils are making steady progress over time, some are not making the progress needed to catch up with their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further develop the quality of teaching and learning in the early years so that all children make the progress of which they are capable
- they sharpen their focus on the impact that additional funding is having on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Leah Goulding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the work of leaders and the

school's self-evaluation. I also met with the early years and key stage 1 leader. In addition, I held a meeting with members of the governing body and a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Together with you or your deputy headteacher, I visited classes to observe pupils learning. I spoke to pupils about their work and I looked at work in their books. During breaktime I spoke informally with pupils, asking them for their views on the school.

I reviewed a range of relevant documents from the school website and some provided by you and your team, including information about pupils' attainment and progress. The school's safeguarding arrangements were scrutinised, including the central record of recruitment checks on staff. There were 118 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 24 free-text responses, which were considered. I also took account of 24 responses to the staff survey and 54 responses to the pupil survey.