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Mrs Sarah Hartley
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hartley

Short inspection of Wimborne First School

Following my visit to the school on 26 February 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 provide strong leadership, much valued by the school community, to 'Develop happy, confident children who thrive in a secure and vibrant atmosphere.'

You and your governors strongly promote a collaborative approach to leadership which enables a united and skilled team to bring staff together and sustain pupils' good progress. Almost all pupils, staff, parents and carers, in meetings with the inspector and responses to the online surveys, indicated great satisfaction with the school. In particular, their views expressed pride in being part of a caring and successful school community. One parent represented the views of most by writing, 'Wimborne First School is a lovely school, the teachers are very caring and approachable and it feels more like a large family than a school.'

You and your staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning and, almost without exception, they rise to the challenge. Throughout the inspection, I observed exemplary behaviour with pupils playing supportively together and helping each other to learn. Governors provide strong support and know the school well. They are robust in holding you and leaders at all levels to account for the school's performance and pupils' achievement. You and the governors provide especially skilled strategic leadership, for example in preparing meticulously for the move into a new school building and planning future nursery and academy developments.

You and your team have worked effectively to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. Leaders now have comprehensive and very effective strategies for checking the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Consequently, leaders set the right priorities and successfully raise pupils' achievements. Teachers have improved the way they adapt their teaching to meet pupils' different needs. Teaching and teaching assistants are deployed well and are effective in setting the right level of challenge to advance pupils' learning.

Your focus on developing pupils' writing in recent years, especially in extending their vocabulary, continues to bear fruit. Pupils across the school make good or better progress, especially in learning to write meaningful expressive sentences. They produce extended pieces of writing across the range of subjects. For example, pupils' work shows they are motivated by interesting topics, such as volcanoes and earthquakes in science and Ancient Egyptian mummification in history. However, pupils' spelling remains a relative weakness that you are now targeting as a priority in your development plan.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are effectively implemented across the school to keep pupils safe. Staff provide good-quality care for all pupils. They sustain warm and supportive relationships with pupils and their parents and show diligence in addressing potential issues. Where the school has had concerns, they have sought specialist advice and acted swiftly to keep pupils safe. The arrangements for staff recruitment and vetting of staff are of the highest quality. Senior leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are kept fully up to date.

Pupils who spoke to me told me that they 'get on very well together' and feel happy and safe at school. The pupils' very positive views were overwhelmingly supported by staff and parents in their responses to the online questionnaires. For example, one parent typically wrote, 'I feel that Wimborne First School have gone above and beyond in their care for my child and ensuring he is in a safe environment.' Pupils said that there is no bullying at the school and added that on the rare times when pupils 'fall out', teachers act quickly to 'stop it'. Pupils were also confident to talk to any staff if they had any worries. Pupils showed that they know how to stay safe, for example using scooters sensibly on the way to school and when using computers. Leaders monitor reasons for absence and promote attendance rigorously. Their close communications with parents and outside agencies help to sustain above average attendance and keep pupils safe when not at school.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry examined how effectively leaders use information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to raise pupils' achievements. In recent years, your determined development of leaders at all levels, and a team approach to driving school improvement, have secured strong leadership. Senior leaders, including governors and middle leaders, all play key roles in checking the

effectiveness of the school. All leaders contribute effectively in evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' achievements. Consequently, their well-considered action plans identify and tackle the right priorities for improvement. This information is fed into your detailed school development plan to drive improvement. Clear evidence of this lies in the improved outcomes at the end of Year 2 in last year's assessments. Continued development of teaching has led to the currently above average proportions of pupils demonstrating expected or higher skills for their age, especially in reading and mathematics.

- The second line of enquiry considered how effectively leaders and teachers check their work to ensure that pupils make best progress. In particular, I examined the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. You have strengthened your procedures to track pupils' achievement as they move through the school. Your thorough analysis of pupils' performance ensures that accurate decisions are made about the priorities for staff training. Staff assess pupils' progress accurately and gain a greater awareness of how groups of pupils are achieving. This is particularly relevant for pupils with SEND and the disadvantaged. It enables staff to make sure that interventions to support pupils at risk of falling behind have a more consistent and effective impact on their progress. Inspection shows that most pupils with SEND achieve well because of the bespoke learning and assistance provided for them.
- Your assistant headteachers have completed a thorough analysis of the use of the pupil premium to aid disadvantaged pupils. They have reviewed the range of interventions provided for the pupils and placed greater emphasis on teachers meeting their needs effectively in class. Leaders have also strengthened the way the impact of additional support is measured to ensure that pupils learn well. This is having a beneficial effect in improving pupils' progress, for example in reading, and helping them catch up with their classmates. You are aware that this deeper focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is relatively new. Consequently, it is too soon to see the full impact on pupils' progress.
- My final line of enquiry examined the effectiveness of leaders' and teachers' work to develop boys' skills during their time in Reception classes. Teachers have identified increasing numbers of younger summer birth children, particularly boys, entering the school with lower than typical gross and fine motor skills. As a result, the leader and teachers in Reception classes have successfully adapted the range of learning experiences provided to meet all children's needs equally effectively. For example, shared whole-class reading texts and topics such as 'Trains, Planes and Automobiles' motivate boys just as well as girls. Teachers also provide a wide and stimulating range of activities to develop the children's fine and gross motor skills, which in turn support their early writing skills. For example, during the inspection, boys as well as girls used fine brushes to paint patterns, chalks to draw letters and pictures and larger brushes to clean chalk boards afterwards. These activities helped to prepare the children for the adults' specific and effective teaching of correct pencil grip and letter formation. Consequently, school assessments and children's skills show that boys are now progressing as successfully as girls and are well prepared for future learning in Year 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- high-quality teaching and effective additional support secure best progress by disadvantaged pupils
- strengthened teaching of writing is sustained to raise the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard and, in particular, to improve pupils' spelling.

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

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other staff who have leadership responsibilities. I met with the members of the school's governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited classrooms with you and we collected and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. I talked with individual pupils during visits to classrooms and observed them reading and checking their work. I heard selected pupils read and talked to them about their reading at home and school. I checked a range of documents relating to safeguarding with you and your administrative staff. We also examined details of pupils' attendance, pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and development plan. I took account of the 77 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and the 57 additional written comments from parents. I also took account of the 40 responses to the staff survey.