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Mrs Sharon Irwin  
Headteacher  
Oxspring Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Irwin

### **Short inspection of Oxspring Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 have a strong vision for learning and high expectations of staff and pupils. Staff and governors share your determination to create a school with a 'culture of ambition and achievement'. You and your staff have fostered a strong and inclusive ethos, which promotes care and kindness across the school. This can be seen in the positive relationships between staff and pupils.

Because of well-planned actions, attainment and progress across the school is improving. Pupils' outcomes have improved year on year since 2016 and are now above the national average in most areas. Where they are not, you are taking robust action that is leading to further improvement.

You and your leaders, some of whom are new to their post, are evaluative and undertake research before planning actions. The local authority has supported you in finding other schools that leaders can learn from. This is enhancing the professional development of all staff and has led to enhancements in teaching and learning across the school. For example, your writing leader has worked with a local school to introduce a new approach for the teaching of writing. Staff work collaboratively and are keen to learn from each other to improve their own practice.

You have responded well to the areas for improvement at the last inspection. You were asked to improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that pupils had opportunities to write about themes that interested them. When I spoke to pupils, they were positive about their

writing and said that they felt proud when they produce written work in all subjects. You do accept, however, that there is still some work to do to improve pupils' progress in writing and have planned further actions to ensure this improvement work continues. You were also asked to ensure that parents were kept well informed about their children's progress. All parents I spoke to, and those who responded to the online Ofsted survey Parent View, agreed they felt they received valuable information about their child's progress.

The parents I spoke to are extremely positive about the school and the support provided for children. Some parents told me about the school's 'community spirit and family feel'. All parents and carers who responded to the online Ofsted survey Parent View would recommend the school. One parent reflected the views of many and said: 'Oxspring is a caring inclusive environment that supports pupils' well-being as well as academic growth. My children are safe and happy.' Parents support the school well, raising funds for equipment to enhance children's learning.

Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. In the lessons we observed together, most pupils were enjoying their learning and working cooperatively. One pupil told me that they enjoy school because: 'All the teachers are hard-working and friendly, and you learn something new every day.' Pupils appreciate the range of extra-curricular and sporting activities that you provide. They say this helps them with their learning. You are rightly very proud of those awards earned from your efforts in developing the school garden. You also ensure that there is a strong focus upon developing pupils' physical and mental well-being. The positive effect of exercise is encouraged through the 'daily-mile' in which pupils and staff participate.

Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are well informed and seek to improve their own and staff's expertise. They, like you, see the school as the hub of the community and are servants to it. Governors make regular checks of the school's performance that challenge and support you and other leaders. You provide governors with detail about the effectiveness of the school. However, governors do not rely on this information and make regular visits to ensure they have insight into the impact of the school's work and their strategic decisions. There are strong links between nominated governors and leaders in the school. As a result, governors are knowledgeable and take well-informed action.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that staff are trained and are alert to signs that pupils might not be safe. You act on and refer any safeguarding concerns to appropriate agencies in a timely manner. This has enabled vulnerable pupils and families to receive appropriate support when they need it. School records show that the school works effectively with other agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and well supported.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in the school. The parents who responded to the Ofsted online survey Parent View agree that their children feel safe and happy in school. School records show that instances of bullying are rare. Pupils agreed and were confident that,

when issues do arise, there is always a trusted adult who will help to resolve them. Pupils have opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. Some pupils attend 'crucial crew' and have learned about keeping themselves safe online by using 'SMART' rules. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are rarely absent. Overall, attendance is above the national average and very few children are persistently absent.

Some initial administrative omissions within the recording of information on the school's single central record were addressed during the inspection.

## **Inspection findings**

- I wanted to find out what actions you have taken to ensure that pupils make good progress in writing. You identified this as an area for improvement both this year and in the last school year. I worked with your subject leader for writing and could see there are now detailed plans in place that identify the sequence of learning needed to ensure that pupils' new learning builds on what they have learned before. When we looked in pupils' books, we could see that teachers ensure that pupils understand the small steps needed to write for a particular purpose successfully. Pupils are encouraged to edit and improve their own work before a teacher gives feedback on it. In lessons, we could see that teachers pay explicit attention to widening pupils' vocabulary, which in turn is improving the quality of their writing.
- You have worked with an external consultant to ensure that all staff understand how to teach handwriting effectively. This has led to improved presentation of work in books and pupils developing a deeper sense of pride in their work. However, during the inspection, we agreed that pupils require further support in order to improve their spelling accuracy when writing independently.
- In mathematics, I could see that outcomes have improved since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils working at the expected standard or higher is above the national average at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Your mathematics leader has worked with other schools, as part of a research group, before introducing a new curriculum and new teaching methods to improve the teaching of mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations in mathematics, and we could see in books and in lessons that many pupils were accessing challenging work. This is contributing to pupils' good progress overall. We looked in books together and could see that pupils make good progress in mathematics. However, while some pupils are given opportunities to explain their thinking or apply new learning to problem-solving, this approach is not yet consistent across the school.
- In agreement with governors, you have restructured the leadership team of the school and appointed a coordinator for pupils with special educational needs (SENCo). Your rationale was to better identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The newly appointed SENCo has worked with colleagues from other settings and quickly made improvements to the provision for pupils with SEND. A diagnostic tool has been introduced to pinpoint precisely the support some pupils need. Regular meetings take place to identify interventions for pupils to improve their progress and the impact of such interventions is carefully monitored and evaluated. This is leading to improved progress for pupils with SEND.

- When observing lessons, we saw that pupils with complex needs are included with their peers and make good progress because of the support of skilled staff working alongside them. The school is proud of its inclusive practice and this is leading to pupils with complex SEND making good progress.
- We looked together at how the school provides additional support for pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for pupil premium funding. Although the school has only a small number of pupils eligible for this funding, their progress in previous years has been slower than the progress of others, particularly in key stage 2. Teachers frequently meet with leaders to talk about disadvantaged pupils' progress and a well-planned programme of interventions is in place to support them. It is evident from a review of pupils' books that disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to that of their peers. I could also see that you know the barriers to learning faced by your pupils and tailor the use of pupil premium funding to provide bespoke solutions to them. For example, the school uses pupil premium funding to provide a breakfast club, which has improved pupils' attendance.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils develop strategies to enable them to spell words accurately when writing independently
- all pupils are given opportunities to solve problems in mathematics and explain their reasoning
- middle leaders continue to develop their skills in order to monitor the effectiveness of teaching in their subject or area.

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

Yours sincerely

Timothy Scargill  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work, alongside the subject leaders for writing and mathematics. I met with you and the assistant headteacher and SENCo. I met with four governors. I also met with your school improvement partner. I spoke with 10 pupils in a discussion group and with pupils informally in lessons and around the school.

I evaluated the 52 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, and met with parents on the school playground. I also took account of the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 23 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire. I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness; the school's development plans; minutes of governor meetings; and safeguarding documentation. I also considered information posted on the school's website.