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Mrs Elen Peal
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Peal

Short inspection of Chalfont St Giles Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 5 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Your very strong and ambitious leadership, modelled equally by your senior team, has ensured that the school continues to improve. You have established consistent and detailed systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning, and its impact on pupils' progress. Through clear communication, you share your high expectations with the school's community. Your focus on understanding 'how we learn' is embraced by pupils, who talk eloquently about what is expected of them and how they can be resilient learners. They take considerable pride in their work. Pupils' ambition, effort and application mean that they complete tasks to very high standards.

Since the previous inspection, pupils have made strong progress and their achievements in reading, writing and mathematics have improved year on year. As a result, the large majority of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve standards in line with those expected for their age. A significantly large proportion of pupils achieve the higher standards because teachers plan learning that encourages pupils to extend and challenge themselves. Targeted support for disadvantaged pupils is helping them

to catch up with other pupils. This has been particularly effective in reading. The school's curriculum is a particular strength. It provides a wealth of creative, first-hand opportunities to enhance and inspire pupils' learning.

Staff are very enthusiastic about working at Chalfont St Giles. All who responded to Ofsted's confidential survey said that they were proud to be a member of staff and enjoyed coming to work. They value your leadership and say that they feel well supported by leaders. Parents praise the strong relationships between pupils and staff and appreciate the school's very caring environment.

Governors know the school well. They are proactive in supporting the school and challenge leaders to gain an in-depth understanding of where there are gaps in provision. They want governance to make a positive difference to pupils' learning.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve pupils' achievement in writing, to make it as strong as their achievement in reading and mathematics. You were also asked to check that teachers were adjusting tasks in lessons to ensure that pupils made maximum progress. Finally, you were asked to support some leaders to develop their skills in data analysis.

Leaders have addressed these aspects efficiently. Pupils are making strong progress in writing because of high-quality teaching. Leaders' actions have empowered pupils to write confidently, think carefully about what and how they write, and be able to edit and improve their work. Teaching is now consistently strong across the school. Lessons are well-planned and meet the needs of all pupils. The positive working relationships in classrooms are key to pupils' success. Pupils are responsible for their own learning and, when necessary, teachers skilfully intervene to ensure that pupils make at least good progress. All staff are skilled in their use of information about pupils' performance. They assess accurately, using a wide range of evidence. While looking at examples of pupils' writing with leaders, their assessment skills and ability to swiftly identify pupils' strengths and areas to improve were impressive.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding is effective. Staff and governors are well trained and have a thorough understanding of how to spot any potential issues and pass on concerns.

Leaders act appropriately to keep pupils safe. They are proactive in working with families and other agencies. Leaders are not afraid to challenge others when they believe that decisions are not made in the best interests of pupils.

Governors keep a close eye on safeguarding procedures and practice. For example, they ensure that the annual safeguarding audit is carried out but, more importantly, that any items needing attention are addressed swiftly. Pupils say they feel safe in school and all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agreed. Pupils are clear about what they should do if they have any

concerns in school. They know they will be listened to by staff and that appropriate action will be taken. Your focus on 'chimp management' is clearly empowering pupils to be responsible for their own behaviour and to consider how they will respond to the behaviour of others.

Inspection findings

- To determine that the school remains good and is improving, I wanted to investigate the progress in writing that current pupils are making. In 2018, pupils' attainment in writing was significantly above the national figures at both the expected standard and the higher standard. However, the progress pupils made was average. The school's own assessment information and work in pupils' books show that current pupils are making strong and sustained progress in writing.
- Leaders are rightly focusing on how to further develop the use of spoken and written language across the school. A new initiative, 'the power of reading,' is supporting pupils exceptionally well to engage with a wider range of high-quality literature. This is stimulating them to write in different genres. During the inspection, pupils and leaders shared a range of pupils' writing with me. Pupils write very effectively for different purposes. They know how to improve their first drafts and use their strong knowledge of grammatical and language conventions, together with their rich vocabulary, to write well for different purposes. They value their written work, which is extremely well-presented.
- Leaders ensure that the teaching of writing is consistently strong across the school. Consequently, teachers clearly communicate what they expect from pupils and model this well. They offer support and challenge, as appropriate, and encourage pupils to develop their own ideas and take risks. Pupils enjoy reading their own writing aloud and do so confidently, with good expression.
- Your 'chasing progress' sessions ensure that all staff know how to assess pupils' work accurately. This system is used well across the school to identify achievements and gaps in pupils' learning. All staff use this information to inform their planning.
- One-to-one mentoring sessions for disadvantaged pupils are helping them to become more confident learners, challenging them to improve, not only in writing but across the whole curriculum. Your focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils is empowering them to catch up more quickly with other pupils.
- During the inspection we looked at the school's attendance figures. Attendance is good because pupils want to come to school to learn. They are fully engaged in lessons and nobody is excluded from learning. You monitor pupils' attendance rigorously and challenge any absenteeism swiftly. Attendance for last year is in line with the national figure. Attendance is currently higher for this academic year.
- The school's website provided very limited information about the role pupils play in school, so we spent some time looking at the value leaders give to pupils' views. It is quickly evident that this is a very inclusive school where

everyone is valued and listened to. You are passionate about giving pupils every opportunity to think about the skills and knowledge they need to be effective learners in life. Your 'learn to learn' fortnight, at the beginning of each school year, helps pupils and staff to reflect on what is expected of them and how to develop as resilient learners.

- Pupils' 'thinking skills' books reflect the value pupils place on learning in different ways. They also reflect the high levels of independence and responsibility that pupils have in school. The broad range of curriculum opportunities you provide for pupils support all aspects of their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching across the school supports pupils to make sustained progress in their writing so that even larger proportions achieve the higher standards.

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

Sarah Varnom
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and English leader, your school secretary and five governors. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Together with you and your deputy headteacher, I observed learning in a number of classes. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and heard pupils read during a guided reading session. Together with leaders, I scrutinised learning in a number of pupils' books, using your assessment information as a reference point. I reviewed a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan; records of pupils' attendance; and documents related to keeping pupils safe.

I looked at 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 30 free-text comments. I also considered 23 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. I met formally with a group of pupils as well as talking to pupils informally throughout the inspection. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements, including those related to recruitment.