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Ms Sophie Powell
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Powell

Short inspection of Fairview Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 April 2019 with Peter Wibroe, Ofsted Inspector, 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. Numerous changes in staffing, including at leadership level, have led to an unsettled time for the school during the past few years. However, you and your co-headteachers have swiftly re-established a sense of purpose and direction in the past year. As a result, staff morale has improved and parental confidence in the school is returning.

You and your team have rekindled a confident, positive and settled atmosphere in the school. Strong and trusting relationships make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils behave well and speak respectfully to adults and to each other. They take pride in their work and are keen to do well.

Historical weaknesses in teaching have led to variations in pupils' progress and outcomes since the previous inspection. For example, until recently, pupils have made much better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. At the end of key stage 2, in 2018, pupils' attainment was above the national average in reading and in line with the national average in mathematics. However, standards were much lower than the national average in writing.

You and your leadership team have made significant improvements to the quality of teaching and learning since your appointment in January 2019. You have taken robust action to address weaknesses in teaching and used training well to develop staff. You have introduced a more accurate and reliable system for assessing pupils'

learning. Teachers now have a clearer view of pupils' progress and how well different groups of pupils are learning. The quality of pupils' learning has recovered quickly. All groups of pupils are now making increasingly strong progress in English, mathematics and in other subjects in the wider curriculum. However, senior leaders know that more needs to be done to ensure that recent improvements in teaching and learning are fully established across the whole school.

Understandably, some parents and carers have been concerned about the school's work during the past few turbulent years. However, improvements since your appointment have begun to strengthen their confidence in the school. Most parents are very pleased with the recent developments, and refer to better teaching, happier children and clearer communication between school and home. However, some would like to know more about their children's learning, and a few are unsure about your vision for the school's future. You and senior leaders continue to focus on the importance of these links with parents and have suitable plans in place to secure further improvement.

Governors share your commitment to ensuring that all groups of pupils achieve well. They provide increasingly effective support and challenge for leaders. The chair of governors has improved the work of the governing body since her appointment in December 2018. She ensures that governors have an accurate view of the school's performance. She is now rightly focused on improving governors' understanding of the role they play in making sure that improvements in the school are fully established and sustained.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors identified inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which hampered pupils' progress. Some of these have been addressed. For example, handwriting skills are taught effectively throughout the school, and pupils present their work with care. However, some variations in the quality of teaching remain, as improvements in practice have yet to be embedded.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team take the safeguarding of pupils very seriously and give pupils' welfare high priority. You make sure that safeguarding policies are fit for purpose, understood by all members of staff and followed consistently throughout the school. Well-established routines and high expectations ensure that the school operates smoothly and safely.

You make good use of training to ensure that staff are clear about safeguarding procedures and their responsibilities for pupils' safety. You respond promptly and effectively to any concerns about pupils' well-being and work effectively with parents and outside agencies.

You make sure that the school provides pupils and staff with a comfortable and secure working environment. The school's site is managed and maintained effectively. You have taken a number of steps, during recent months, to increase the school's security. For example, you have updated and strengthened perimeter

fencing. You have also checked that the school complies with fire regulations.

Inspection findings

- We focused particularly on the following areas during the inspection: how effectively teaching supports the development of pupils' writing skills and how well disadvantaged pupils achieve.
- Until recently, historical weaknesses in teaching and inaccuracies in teachers' assessments hindered pupils' progress, particularly in writing. Pupils' outcomes in writing were below the national averages at the end of both key stages in 2018. However, developments in the quality of teaching in the past few months have secured substantial improvements in the standard of pupils' written work. As a result, all groups of pupils across the school now make strong progress in writing. They develop reliable writing skills and become increasingly confident and accomplished writers.
- Senior leaders have worked constructively with teachers to review and update the writing curriculum during the past few months. The revised curriculum provides a much more cohesive and systematic framework to support the teaching and learning of writing skills. As a result, increasingly effective teaching equips pupils with a well-developed vocabulary and secure grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.
- High-quality texts are used effectively throughout the school to capture pupils' interest and engagement with books. These extend pupils' vocabulary and deepen their understanding of how authors write for different purposes and audiences.
- The teaching of handwriting has improved since the previous inspection. A consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting skills throughout the school ensures that pupils develop an even, legible style which helps them to become fluent writers.
- Historical weaknesses in the quality of teaching have resulted in the variable progress made by disadvantaged pupils. However, they, like their classmates, have benefited from improvements in the quality of teaching during the past few months. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are now making similarly strong progress to other pupils and are starting to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Senior leaders have increased their focus on ensuring that all groups of pupils make strong progress from their starting points and achieve well, regardless of background or ability. They have used training effectively to strengthen teachers' understanding of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and to hone teachers' skills in supporting pupils' learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to support all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged. Improvements in the school's assessment procedures mean that teachers are able to spot pupils who are at risk of falling behind. They act more promptly than before, enabling the right support to be put in place quickly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements in teaching are fully embedded across the school
- governors play an even stronger role in the school's development
- parents receive regular, clear information about their children's learning and understand the vision of senior leaders for the school's future.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we observed learning in 16 lessons, jointly with you and your co-headteachers. We looked at pupils' work during our visits to classrooms and carried out a separate scrutiny of a sample of pupils' books. We considered a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan and information about pupils' progress. We also reviewed a range of safeguarding documents, including the school's single central record.

During the inspection, we met with you, your co-headteachers and a representative of the local authority. We also met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. We spoke with staff, parents and pupils. In addition, we considered 233 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 160 free-text comments. We also took account of 38 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.