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Mrs Heather Clarke
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clarke

Short inspection of Potley Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 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. The school has gone through an unsettled period since the previous inspection, with many members of staff unavoidably absent. You have managed staff changes well, ensuring that the pupils continue to learn in a happy and safe environment. Together with your deputy headteacher, who joined the school in January 2018, and alongside a newly formed senior leadership team, you have ensured that the strong quality of teaching in the school is maintained.

You have worked successfully to develop the skills of staff by providing high-quality training, coaching and feedback. Subject leaders regularly check the quality of teaching in their subject and the quality of work in pupils' books. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the strengths and development areas of the school. They are knowledgeable, and support and challenge their colleagues well. All staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire enjoy working at Potley Hill Primary. It is clear to see that effective, collaborative leadership is providing the capacity to further improvement.

Pupils enjoy attending Potley Hill Primary and display positive attitudes towards their learning. They think that their school is friendly and that their lessons are fun. They like many aspects of school life, including their art lessons, sporting opportunities and the numerous leadership roles available to them, such as well-being champions and librarians. Most parents and carers who spoke with me or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive, saying that their children are happy. As one parent wrote, 'My children have formed lovely

bonds with all their teachers.' Another parent added, 'Our son is thriving here.'

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the rates of progress that pupils made in writing and mathematics. In 2018, by the end of key stage 2, pupils made progress in line with the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in mathematics has risen sharply, with a higher proportion of pupils than that seen nationally reaching the expected standard in the 2018 end-of-key-stage national assessments.

Leaders were also asked to ensure that lessons provide activities that highly motivate and inspire pupils to do their best. You have been particularly successful here. During my visits to lessons, and while looking at pupils' books, I could see that pupils at Potley Hill Primary work purposefully and enjoy their learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed. The designated safeguarding leaders work well together to protect children, acting swiftly to address concerns. Strong communication between the safeguarding team, other staff and external agencies ensures that nothing is overlooked. Leaders know their children and families well. The single central record of checks on adults' suitability to work and volunteer in the school is maintained efficiently. Safeguarding training is frequent, well planned and effective. Leaders regularly check that training is understood and, as a result, staff have an up-to-date knowledge of possible safeguarding risks facing the pupils in their care.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school, telling me that 'adults keep an eye out for us'. They told me that bullying rarely happens, but when it does, they have complete faith that it would be sorted. One pupil said, 'This is a school that is good with care.' Pupils have a thorough understanding of what bullying is. Leaders have ensured that pupils receive regular up-to-date e-safety lessons. Parents receive helpful information on current games and 'apps' that their children may be using. As a result, pupils have a strong knowledge of what to do if they receive a message online that makes them feel uncomfortable. They clearly explained to me that they would screenshot the message, block, delete and tell an adult.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to focus on: the progress that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make in writing; how well teachers challenge the most able pupils; and how effectively leaders are improving the teaching of mathematics.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in writing. They have many opportunities to learn, practise and embed the skills that they are taught, including in subjects other than English. Spelling is secure. The vast majority of pupils apply their phonics knowledge well. Pupils are ambitious in their constructions of sentences and choice of words, supported effectively by

teachers' focus on improving vocabulary and oracy. Pupils successfully use editing and proofreading skills to improve the quality of their writing. Presentation and handwriting are neat. Mark-making and early writing skills are well developed in Reception, with children writing with confidence and enjoyment.

- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who met the higher standards in writing and mathematics in Year 6 was in line with the national picture. In addition, by the end of key stage 1, a higher proportion of pupils than seen nationally reached a greater depth of learning in reading. During my visits to lessons, I observed teachers carefully questioning the most able pupils to extend and deepen their thinking. However, sometimes, teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can attain in history, geography and science are not high enough. Tasks are not always sufficiently demanding for them to achieve the depth of learning of which they are capable in these subjects.
- In order to ensure that pupils make better progress in mathematics, leaders have reviewed the mathematics curriculum, increasing the opportunities for pupils to reason and problem solve in their lessons. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons, using mathematical vocabulary securely when discussing their work with their friends. Nevertheless, sometimes, assessment information about what pupils know and can do is not used well enough. Sometimes, teachers do not plan and adapt activities to meet the needs of different pupils effectively. As a result, work is at times too hard or too easy. During our visits to lessons, and while looking at pupils' books, we saw how some pupils are not always moved on to challenging work swiftly enough. As a result, the progress made by some pupils in mathematics, particularly, but not solely, the pupils with below average starting points, is not always as strong as it should be.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils in history, geography and science are regularly challenged to build their subject-specific skills effectively
- assessment strategies in mathematics lead effectively to the provision of work that is consistently well matched to pupils' prior knowledge and skills, particularly, but not solely, for those pupils with below average starting points.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the school's effectiveness. You and I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils, and to look at their work. With your deputy headteacher, we looked at the quality of work in a range of pupils' books. I considered the 57 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. I also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires were considered and I had a meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school.

I met with three governors, including the vice-chair of the local governing body, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I also met with a group of subject leaders. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement planning, information about pupils' progress, and various policies. I also examined the school's website.