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Mrs Gill Denham
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Denham

Short inspection of Marish Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 2019 with Kevin Parfoot, 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 November 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.

You and your leadership team have very high expectations for yourselves and for pupils. You have created a strong culture in which every pupil, regardless of background, is encouraged to 'Strive for the Heights'. Your leadership team is highly skilled, and throughout the school you support all staff to be the best they can be. There is a strong team ethos in which everyone understands the role they have to play to secure high personal and academic standards for all pupils.

One of the many strengths of the school is the commitment of all staff to inclusion. All pupils are warmly welcomed into the school's nurturing environment, in which their individual talents are recognised. The large majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted survey appreciates the work of the school. This was reflected in the comment made by one parent, who wrote, 'This is a wonderful school and I am proud to send my daughter here.'

Pupils are proud of their school and say there is nothing they would like to change. They say that all pupils get on very well together and that they enjoy working and

playing with pupils from different backgrounds. Pupils say that they are all treated equally and fairly, and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated. Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes towards school. They want to learn and take great pride in presenting their work neatly and accurately. Pupils show great respect towards each other. They particularly value being part of a multi-cultural school in which every pupil is valued. One pupil said, 'It doesn't matter whether you are tall, short, black, white or brown. We are all equal.'

You and your leaders know the school exceptionally well. You have structured your staff across this very large school so that leaders keep a close eye on what happens in every class on a daily basis. You have established a team of experienced leaders who visit classrooms formally as well as informally. They know where teaching is stronger and are well placed to provide support to their less experienced colleagues. Consequently, teaching is never less than good.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You have worked tirelessly with parents to improve pupils' attendance so that it is now above the national average. Your subject leader for English has introduced actions that have improved standards in reading, which are now above the national average. Your school development plan is thorough and ambitious and seeks to build on what you already achieve very well. You have plans in place to further develop the curriculum so that pupils build their knowledge and skills through a wide range of exciting learning opportunities. However, current Year 6 pupils do not yet have access to as much of an enriched curriculum as pupils in the rest of the school.

Your governors provide a good balance of support and challenge to you and your leadership team. They are knowledgeable because they visit the school regularly to see for themselves how well the school runs on a daily basis. However, not all governors have a strategic understanding of the school's needs, so they are not always able to evaluate the impact of their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school has a high proportion of vulnerable pupils and families. Consequently, effective arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are given the highest priority. The systems for safeguarding pupils are robust and fit for purpose. All staff receive appropriate and up-to-date training. They are completely confident that they know what to do should they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders act quickly when a concern is raised. They have close working relationships with external agencies and are tenacious in chasing up to ensure action is timely. They make sure that pupils and their families receive the support they need.

Pupils are taught to stay safe in and out of school. They have a very clear understanding of the need to stay safe when using the internet and understand the associated potential dangers. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that adults take their concerns seriously. Pupils are confident that there is always someone they can share their worries with.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at the following aspects of the school's work: the effectiveness of the school's actions to raise pupils', especially boys', attainment in writing across key stage 1; the impact of actions taken by school leaders to strengthen pupils' progress in reading; what leaders have done to achieve above-average outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; and the extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and adds to their enjoyment of school.
- Published performance information shows that pupils' attainment in writing was lower than their attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2018. However, scrutiny of pupils' current work shows that both boys and girls write exceptionally well in Year 1 and Year 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils write fluently and confidently. Their handwriting is neat, with correctly formed and orientated letters. Pupils spell and punctuate their work accurately and use a wide vocabulary to engage the interest of the reader.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to write in all subjects. As a result, they learn to write factual accounts as well as using their imagination to write short stories and poems. Pupils' writing is lively and engaging and allows both boys and girls to achieve well. Pupils across the school have opportunities to write for many different purposes, including note taking, annotations, captions and labels. As a result, pupils practise their skills regularly in many different contexts. This helps to build their confidence as well as stamina, and secures standards that are well above average.
- School leaders have introduced a range of measures that have successfully raised standards in reading. As a result, pupils make very strong progress and reach high standards. Leaders have introduced guided reading in all year groups, using inspiring texts that make pupils want to read. They have also introduced an electronic programme of reading that has captured the interest of all pupils, particularly boys. Additionally, the systems for teaching reading comprehension skills have been refined so that all pupils regularly answer questions about what they have read. As a result of these actions, pupils across the school read confidently and fluently and with good understanding.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school make exceptionally good progress in English and mathematics as well as in other subjects. This is because staff have a thorough understanding of their learning, personal and emotional needs. Disadvantaged pupils who need support with their academic work are provided with additional help in class or in small groups. Learning mentors and play therapists offer emotional support and guidance for those pupils who, at times, find some aspects of school difficult to manage. Additionally, there is practical help to support the costs of uniform, travel and educational visits for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, staff provide the right help and support, giving disadvantaged pupils the confidence to succeed.
- Published assessment information for this school shows that disadvantaged pupils do equally as well, and sometimes better than, other pupils in the end of key

stage tests. The work seen in the books of current pupils across the school supports this view. Work in all subjects is presented to a good standard, reflecting teachers' high expectations for disadvantaged pupils.

- One of the strengths of the school is the quality of the curriculum provided for pupils. Pupils study a wide range of subjects in addition to English and mathematics. Subjects, including art, geography, history and science, are very well planned and pupils build their skills and knowledge sequentially as they move through the school. In almost all year groups, pupils' learning has breadth and depth, so they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Whatever the subject, pupils' work is beautifully presented, reflecting the pride they take in their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Year 6 pupils have the same access to the rich and broad curriculum enjoyed in other year groups
- all governors have a strategic overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and can articulate these clearly and concisely.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional school's commissioner and the director of children's services for Slough. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors observed pupils working in a range of classes across the school. They looked at work in pupils' books as well as that in displays around the school. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and as they moved around the building. Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, with governors and with 2 groups of pupils. Among the documents scrutinised were plans for the school's development, the school's own view of its performance and minutes from the governors' meetings. Inspectors also scrutinised information held electronically about how the school keeps pupils safe.

The views of parents were considered by analysing the 49 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including 37 free-text comments. The inspectors also met with a number of parents informally during the inspection. The views of staff were taken account of through analysis of 41 responses to the survey for staff.