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Mrs Rachel Brock
Headteacher
Estcots Primary School
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Dear Mrs Brock

Short inspection of Estcots Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 July 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. Together with the deputy headteacher and other leaders, you have maintained a successful drive to improve this school. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school, because they take a wide range of evidence into account when reaching their view. They recognise the school's many strengths and have plans to bring about further improvement.

The school environment reflects senior leaders' high aspirations and the diverse, exciting curriculum that pupils follow. While the inspection took place there were many beautifully presented displays around the school showcasing pupils' work, including in art and writing. Quotations on walls from books and famous people constantly reinforce the very positive approach to life and to learning that leaders promote.

Pupils enjoy learning. Those in Year 5 spoke enthusiastically about their African topic and particularly enjoyed finding out about Nelson Mandela. Pupils of all ages concentrate well in lessons because teaching captures their interest and there are clear expectations for behaviour. This successfully resolved one of the areas that inspectors asked leaders to address at the previous inspection. Pupils are also well behaved, polite and considerate at free times and when moving around the school.

Leaders consult pupils about various aspects of the school's work. They listen carefully to pupils' views about their year in the school, so that they can make any adjustments for next year. As a result, pupils are articulate and able to explain their

ideas clearly. Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, including asking older pupils to look after younger ones. This all contributes to a happy, harmonious school community, where all get on well together.

Senior leaders place a high priority on ensuring that all in the school are treated with kindness and respect. Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's work. Staff are wholly positive about the school, and all who expressed an opinion said that they enjoy working here. They feel proud to be part of the staff team. As with pupils, senior leaders make sure that the well-being of staff is always considered. One staff member said: '[Senior leaders] have supported me brilliantly in ensuring my work/life balance and couldn't have been more helpful.' Staff turnover in recent years has been low.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school. They visit the school regularly and consider a wide range of evidence, including the views of pupils and of experts who visit the school, when reaching their judgements. Governors work closely with leaders to ensure that self-evaluation is accurate and that development plans are well targeted. They check that plans are being carried out in a timely manner and are having their intended impact.

Parents are wholly positive about the school. The overwhelming majority would recommend the school, and feel that their children are safe, happy and taught well. They particularly appreciate the way that staff are approachable and will always listen to any concerns that parents may have. As a result, any issues that arise are dealt with quickly and firmly.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Right from the moment a visitor sets foot in the school, staff check their identity and ask them to read the school's safeguarding arrangements and sign to confirm that they have done so. This reflects the strong safeguarding culture that permeates the school. Senior leaders have a detailed understanding of the potential dangers for pupils, both in school and also while out in the neighbourhood. They make sure that the curriculum reflects these risks and helps to minimise them.

All staff are well equipped to safeguard pupils because they have had training and understand clearly how to recognise, report and record any safeguarding issues. Staff know that if they have concerns that are not being taken seriously, they can go directly to authorities outside the school. Those directly responsible for safeguarding regularly review the provision for vulnerable pupils regularly, and ensure that the pupils receive the support needed, including from external agencies. Senior leaders leave no stone unturned in securing the help needed to keep pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to look closely at three aspects of the school's work. First, we looked at how well reading is taught, especially in key stage 1. During the day we also

turned our attention to how well pupils achieve in reading and writing across the school. Pupils get off to a good start in reading. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard at the end of Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average in recent years. However, these high outcomes have not been reflected in the proportion of pupils who have exceeded the expected standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2.

- Leaders have invested this year in providing pupils in key stage 1 with many more books to strengthen their reading. Pupils read regularly in school and at home and enjoy reading. Work in pupils' reading journals shows that they learn to retrieve information from texts, make predictions and draw inferences from what they read. This has led to better outcomes this year in reading in key stage 1, both at age-related expectations and the greater-depth standards.
- Too few pupils achieve the higher standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 6. Senior leaders have well-advanced plans to make a similarly rich investment in books for pupils in key stage 2, so that pupils develop a strong love of reading. Leaders also plan to use reading as a way of enriching pupils' vocabulary and enabling them to understand what constitutes excellent writing.
- Next, we looked at what has led to the improvements in outcomes in mathematics, especially at the end of key stage 2. Leaders acted decisively when outcomes in mathematics reached a low point in 2016. They introduced a new curriculum which leaders had researched thoroughly. Staff had extensive, ongoing training to equip them to teach using this new approach. Parents were also informed and invited into the school so that they could support their children at home.
- This led to immediate improvements in the teaching of mathematics, which have been sustained and built upon. Outcomes in mathematics at the end of Year 6 have improved strongly year on year since 2016. Standards continue to rise this academic year across the school. However, too few pupils still exceed the expected standards in mathematics.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective because it equips pupils with the ability to recall number facts rapidly, enabling them to calculate quickly and accurately, using formal methods. They also tackle challenging problems that require them to apply their learning to different situations. Pupils regularly explain their ideas using mathematical reasoning. For example, in Year 2, pupils were looking for the odd number out in a group of three numbers. Different pupils identified different numbers, but each backed up their ideas with sound reasoning. This successfully tackled another area that inspectors asked leaders to improve at the previous inspection
- Finally, we considered the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders and teachers work hard to ensure that pupils with SEND have their needs accurately assessed. Teachers adapt learning to meet these needs, providing additional support when needed.
- Teachers address not only pupils' academic needs but also focus closely on their personal and social development. Specialist support such as play therapy and that provided by learning mentors all contribute to a provision that successfully

addresses all aspects of pupils' learning and development. Staff, including teaching assistants, have a range of different skills. All have received training appropriate to their work, including through working with a local special school. This all contributes to these pupils typically making good progress from their starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have consistently high expectations, so that a greater proportion of pupils achieve the higher standards across the school
- teachers in key stage 2 provide pupils with a wide range of high-quality texts to read at home and at school so that pupils:
 - develop a love of reading
 - acquire a rich vocabulary to use in their writing
 - understand how to write skilfully for different audiences.

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

Yours sincerely

Bruce Waelend
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss various aspects of the school's work. I also had meetings with the leader of mathematics and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) to discuss their work. I spoke to several staff members around the school during the day. Four members of the governing body met with me to discuss their role in the school. I met with a representative of the local authority.

We visited classes in almost all year groups to observe teaching and learning, to talk to pupils and look at their work. We did not visit Year 6 because they were out of school on a visit, but we did look at some of their work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtime and lunchtime. Several pupils spoke with me on the field during these times. I met with three pupils each from Years 2 and 3 to talk about reading and listen to them read. I also spoke with parents on the playground at the end of the day. I took into account 145 responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, 24 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 35 responses to the staff questionnaire.