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Andrea Simonsson
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Dear Mrs Simonsson

Short inspection of Farncombe Church of England Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 13 July 2017, 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a harmonious community within a calm, orderly environment. You have the full support of governors, staff and parents, and staff turnover is low. Parents are very enthusiastic about the school. They feel well informed and consider you to be an effective and caring leader. Several parents commented on how well the expansion of the school is being organised.

Your emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning has been effective. As a result, pupils are making good progress and attaining well. Staff are proud to be associated with the school and appreciate the support and guidance you provide. You have made the appropriate changes to the leadership team to ensure that there is a clear focus on raising teachers' expectations and developing their teaching skills. Your governing body provides strong support. Governors are knowledgeable and passionate about the school. They often visit to monitor improvements and challenge leaders to do even better.

I enjoyed meeting your pupils. They spoke confidently about their learning and enthusiastically about their school. When we visited classrooms, we saw pupils focused on their work and enjoying their learning. Teachers use resources well to

plan stimulating and challenging activities. For example, we saw pupils in Year 2 collaboratively planning to make a robot car travel a particular path on a grid.

Around the school, pupils were invariably polite and, at breaktimes, they played together or chatted companionably. Pupils told me that they get along well with each other and that examples of pupils being mean to each other or bullying are rare. They have great confidence that their teachers will sort out any behaviour concerns quickly and fairly. They appreciate the availability of 'worry boxes', although they said that there is rarely a need to use them.

You reacted swiftly and effectively to the recommendations in the previous inspection report. For example, pupils are now making more rapid progress than previously in developing good writing skills, due to your new approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling. The training that you arranged for teachers to develop pupils' writing skills was successful. This year, the proportions of pupils in Year 2 reaching and exceeding the expected standards in writing have improved and are above average. Pupils are making good progress in reading and mathematics as well. As a consequence, in 2017, more pupils reached the expected or higher standards in these subjects than in 2016. Attainment in mathematics was not quite as good as in reading and writing.

You have successfully introduced a new pupil assessment system for the national curriculum. Teachers understand the standards that pupils are expected to reach and, as shown by moderation reports from the local authority, they accurately evaluate the quality of pupils' work. When we looked into pupils' books, we saw the high quality of advice on how to improve that was provided by teachers.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together with other leaders, you have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding pupils are fit for purpose. Records are stored appropriately and we discussed further minor improvements that could be made. Staff have been suitably trained and get regular updates on safeguarding issues. Staff know how to report concerns and are acutely aware of their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. The governor for safeguarding visits each half term to check on safeguarding, to arrange mock evacuations and to make health and safety walks around the site.

You make use of the support available from local social services and access safeguarding advice when necessary. You do not accept a slow response to concerns and you have taken steps in the past to prompt more effective action from social services.

Pupils feel cared for and valued, and they said that they have an adult they can turn to if they are ever worried. You provide important support for any vulnerable pupils through a helpful nurture club. Pupils learn, for example through assemblies, lessons and visiting speakers, how to stay safe and healthy. You keep a clear record of the small number of behaviour incidents and the subsequent actions taken.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that the focus of this inspection would be on:
 - how effectively the most able pupils are challenged in their writing
 - how effectively the pupil premium fund is used to reduce the differences between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of others nationally
 - the attendance of pupils in receipt of free school meals and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- When we visited classrooms, we saw pupils engaged in interesting writing activities. For example, the most able pupils were appropriately challenged to produce a tourist pamphlet for 'Farncombe on Sea'. Good use was made of interesting visual resources to stimulate their writing.
- You have ensured that teachers have had training in ways to help pupils to develop higher-level writing skills and have worked with local schools to share good practice. By moderating teachers' evaluations of pupils' writing within school and across the local cluster of schools, you have made sure that teachers understand the high standards that pupils have to reach to show greater depth in their writing.
- Pupils' written work from across the school confirmed the information that you shared with me about pupils' improved achievement in writing. The most able pupils are making better progress in writing than they did last year. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils have attained greater depth in their writing.
- Pupils' books evidence that they complete a suitable range of activities in lessons to develop mathematical concepts over time. Teachers' regular feedback and guidance support pupils to improve their work, and their standards of presentation are high. However, there is some repetition of tasks, and more challenging activities need to be routinely offered, particularly to stretch the most able pupils.
- You have used much of the pupil premium funding to provide effective additional adult support for eligible pupils. You have itemised the extra spending and its impact on each pupil's progress, enabling governors to check that it is money well spent. Your rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and the work of teaching assistants have ensured that adults have high expectations of what disadvantaged pupils can achieve. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their different starting points.
- You have worked hard to make sure that pupils attend regularly. You ensure that parents know the importance of regular attendance and that pupils are keen for their class to win the weekly award for attendance. Attendance has been above average for the last few years. However, you recognise that the small groups of pupils who are entitled to free school meals or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not attending as well as their peers. Despite the stalwart efforts made by yourself and the home-school link worker, although the attendance of these groups of pupils has improved, it still lags behind others at school and is below average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils do not spend too long on activities in mathematics that they have already mastered, but are moved on to more challenging work in a timely manner
- they continue to improve the attendance of pupils in receipt of free school meals and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that it is at least in line with the national average for primary schools.

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

Yours sincerely

James McVeigh
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met you, the leader responsible for numeracy and literacy and the special educational needs coordinator. I spoke to the chair and vice chair of the governing body and the business manager. I visited all classrooms with you to see pupils engaged in their learning. At breaktimes, I toured the playground and the dining hall. I looked at pupils' written work together, on occasions, with yourself and other leaders. You shared information with me about pupils' performance and attendance.

I examined school documents, including records about safeguarding, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness and governors' visits. I spoke to a group of Year 2 pupils formally and with other pupils informally in class and around the school. I spoke to several parents as they dropped off their children at school. I considered 104 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 48 written comments and an email from a parent, and 17 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. I also considered 38 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.