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Miss Aly Ward
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Dear Miss Ward

Short inspection of Hawkinge Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 June 2018, 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 May 2014.

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 will be a section 5 inspection.

You have created a culture where the success of pupils is at the heart of everything the school does. Your strong leadership inspires staff to be the best they can be. Pupils benefit greatly from the dedicated, hard-working and ambitious staff team that you lead. You are ably supported by the deputy headteacher and, together, you have ensured that the quality of teaching is of a high standard. This has had a marked improvement on pupils' outcomes. Leaders at all levels take responsibility for the areas they lead and this helps to drive continuous improvement. As a result, pupils make rapid progress across the full range of subjects. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Governors are dedicated and committed to the school. They know the school well and accurately identify the strengths and areas for development through their careful scrutiny of information provided by the school and their own visits. They

provide effective challenge and support which contribute to the sustained improvements in pupils' outcomes.

Staff greatly value your support and challenge. They are united behind your vision for the school to help pupils reach their full potential. Parents and carers appreciate your determined leadership and the contribution of all the staff. They know that their children are extremely well cared for and make excellent progress during their time at school.

Your high expectations and 'no excuses' culture are shared by all. Throughout the inspection, pupils demonstrated excellent attitudes to their learning. They thoroughly enjoy the tasks they complete in lessons but also greatly value the learning that takes place. This helps contribute to strong levels of attendance for most groups of pupils, with the exception of disadvantaged pupils, whose attendance lags behind that of others nationally. Mutual respect lies at the heart of all relationships in the school and this is reflected in the way pupils support and challenge each other within lessons. They hold high expectations of themselves and are confident in their own ability. However, although pupils' work is generally of high quality in a range of subjects, at times, the quality of their presentation is not as high as it could be.

You have successfully addressed the areas that inspectors identified at the last inspection. For example, as a result of the continuing focus that you place on the accurate assessment of their learning, pupils now receive excellent feedback on how they can improve their work. Consequently, pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have created a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Thorough checks are in place to ensure that all staff are safe to work with children. The designated safeguarding leads effectively fulfil their roles and make sure that all school staff receive high-quality and frequent training. Staff value this training and, importantly, relate it to their everyday practice. This results in a staff team that is highly vigilant and confident to report any concerns that may arise.

Staff and professionals from outside agencies provide support to pupils and their families when required. This ensures that pupils' well-being is always given a high priority. Referrals to outside agencies are completed quickly.

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe but also to learn how to take risks in a controlled environment. For example, in science lessons, teachers plan carefully to ensure that risks are identified and that pupils know how to manage these in an appropriate way.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at specific aspects of the school's work, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the progress that pupils, particularly boys and those who are disadvantaged, are making in writing; the leadership and effectiveness of the curriculum; and how well leaders are improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Effective teaching, combined with the school's strong assessment practice, means that all groups of pupils, including boys and those who are disadvantaged, make excellent progress in writing. Pupils are keen writers and produce great quantities of high-quality writing across the curriculum.
- The English curriculum is based around carefully chosen texts that motivate and inspire pupils to write for a wide range of purposes. Teachers have a deep knowledge of how pupils learn to write. They use complex terminology alongside simpler explanations and provide excellent writing models for pupils to learn from. Teachers use assessment information well to carefully plan pupils' next learning tasks. They share this information with pupils so that they can take responsibility for their own progress and, as a result, they strive to do their very best.
- The curriculum is creative, imaginative and resourceful, providing pupils with exceptional opportunities so that they make rapid progress and attain high standards. It is planned with precision to ensure that learning builds on what pupils already know and have experienced. This results in pupils not only thoroughly enjoying their learning, but valuing it as well.
- Pupils are excited by their learning, including the exciting starts to new topics which teachers provide. For example, pupils in Year 1 cooked Chinese food at the start of their topic about China. Parents value the opportunity to be involved in their child's learning, for example by attending regular events where they can find out about what their child has been working on in school. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'The curriculum is inspired. My daughter is continually buzzing with the new, interesting and intriguing knowledge she gains.'
- Rigorous assessment systems across the curriculum mean that teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn next and when they need to intervene to provide additional support or challenge. School staff are unanimous in their praise of the training that the school organises for them. They say that this is effective in helping them to become great teachers and to enable pupils to achieve highly.
- Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve disadvantaged pupils' attendance and reduce these pupils' rates of persistent absence. A range of strategies are in place to encourage good attendance. Additional funding is used effectively to encourage pupils to attend breakfast club, where sports coaches provide enjoyable and healthy activities.

- Leaders' determination to ensure that no pupils fall behind has resulted in the school implementing its 'keep up, catch up' approach. At the start of each school day, pupils who have been absent from school have the opportunity to catch up on learning they have missed. Leaders recognise that this is not an alternative to good school attendance but it illustrates their determination for all pupils to reach their full potential. However, while levels of persistent absence are reducing as a result of leaders' effective work, they are still too high.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and reduce rates of persistent absence
- pupils consistently present their work well in all subjects, in line with school policies
- pupils' high standards of achievement across the curriculum are sustained.

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

Yours sincerely

James Freeston
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior leaders and governors, and spoke with a representative from the local authority. I visited classes in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 to observe learning and talk to pupils. I spoke with pupils about their experience of school and I scrutinised pupils' work in their books. I analysed 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. I examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's improvement plan, documentation relating to safeguarding and the school's attendance information.