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Mrs Lucy Howe
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Howe

Short inspection of Foxhills Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your arrival in April 2016, you have led with determination to improve the quality of teaching in the school. You take every opportunity to ensure that the strong skills of highly effective teachers are shared to strengthen teaching further. Staff understand your vision and aims. Parents value your inspirational leadership.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to Foxhills Infant School. They think that their school is friendly and that other pupils are kind. They were keen to tell me about the recent museum trip to learn about HMS Titanic and the wide range of clubs available to them, like gymnastics and cricket. Pupils behave well in their lessons. They understand the school's behaviour code and strive to 'get to gold'. Children get off to a good start in the early years. They engage enthusiastically in the activities on offer. For example, during my visits to classes, I observed a group of children building a cave for a dragon. They were independently considering the most suitable building blocks for the desired shape. They made these choices confidently.

Many parents commented on how happy their children are at the school. Staff know pupils well and parents appreciate the individual care and support their children receive. One parent wrote, 'I am so impressed with the school, from the way that the children are nurtured, to the excellent learning opportunities they are provided with.'

The previous inspection report highlighted the school's many strengths, including pupils' high attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, their good behaviour and the school's strong values. You have maintained these strengths and the capacity for further improvement is clear to see. You are ably supported by enthusiastic and knowledgeable leaders. You recognise the need to continue to develop the capacity of your middle leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning improves further. At the last inspection leaders were asked to ensure that teachers provide pupils with challenging tasks that stretch them. You have taken effective action to improve this area. However, we agreed that the level of challenge could be improved further in mathematics.

You have a good understanding of the many strengths of Foxhills Infant School and those aspects that could be even better. In Year 2 in 2016, writing attainment was below that seen nationally. You responded rapidly to improve the teaching of writing, resulting in above national attainment in Year 2 in 2017. You recognise, however, that the teaching of phonics is not yet secure throughout the school. We also agreed that leaders' evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium funding could be sharper.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties well. Policies and procedures are fit for purpose and day-to-day routines are secure. Communication between staff is strong. Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of staff are fully in place. Leaders work successfully with outside agencies. Safeguarding training is regular and up to date. As a result, staff and governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. Staff have created a very caring environment. As one parent commented, 'I feel very confident in leaving my child in their care, knowing he is very well looked after.'

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that staff look after them well. They told me that if they had any worries, 'teachers would help us straight away'.

Inspection findings

- Before the inspection, we agreed that the focus would be on how well pupils are challenged in mathematics; how well leaders have improved the teaching of writing; and how effectively leaders use the additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- My classroom visits, including the scrutiny of pupils' work, showed that in most classrooms teachers give pupils tasks that provide an appropriate challenge. The mathematics curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding by using their reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, we agreed that some pupils were not being moved on to the more challenging tasks soon enough.
- Since your appointment, you have rapidly improved the teaching of writing, including the use of phonics for spelling. Leaders have established a consistent approach to teaching writing and phonics throughout the school. Your exciting

curriculum has writing at the centre. Pupils have many opportunities to write at length, across a range of subjects. Pupils' books show that they are making good progress in writing and their basic skills are secure. Their handwriting and presentation are consistently of a high standard. Nevertheless, during our visits to phonics lessons, we agreed that there were some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and subject knowledge of staff. You are currently developing the role of middle leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching is more consistent.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. In Year 2 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils attained in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by this group of pupils. They track pupils' progress carefully on an individual basis. A wide range of support is in place. However, the success of each approach is not evaluated well enough. Leaders do not have a secure overview of how the funding is spent. This means that governors are not fully able to hold leaders to account for the use of this funding.
- Governors are skilled and committed. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are increasingly effective at holding leaders to account for improving the school. Governors undertake regular visits to the school to validate what they have been told.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue their good work to develop the skills of middle leaders so that they can have an even greater impact on sustaining improvements to the quality of teaching
- pupils are fully challenged by their work in mathematics
- recent improvements in the teaching of phonics are embedded fully across the school
- they sharpen their evaluation of the impact of the pupil premium funding.

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 to discuss the school's effectiveness. We visited lessons to observe pupils' learning, speak to pupils and look at their work. Together with the mathematics and English leaders, we assessed the quality of pupils' work in books. I met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke to pupils about their school. I considered 86 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire and the accompanying free-text comments. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. I also reviewed a wide range of documentation, including your school's self-evaluation, the pupil premium strategy, pupil progress information and records of leaders' checks on teaching and policies.