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Mr Deamonn Hewett-Dale
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hewett-Dale

Short inspection of The Flying Bull Academy

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are a strong, inspiring leader. Your clarity of thought and determination to ensure that all pupils are happy, safe and achieve well has been central to making sure that teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff, parents, governors and members of the University of Chichester Academy Trust have confidence in your leadership. You have created a strong staff team and a sense of community, which is valued by pupils and their parents. As one pupil told me, 'everyone here has a really good bond; it's all about friendship.'

Pupils feel safe and happy in your school. They behave well, both in class and around the school. You have created a vibrant, collaborative culture where pupils want to achieve their best, and know that their teachers will support them in doing this. Pupils talk confidently about their learning; one eloquently explained her understanding of a poem that the class were studying, highlighting the different ways the author had used descriptive language. Another pupil delighted in telling me that he now understands how digestion works because his teacher had made his science lessons interesting and great fun.

You are determined that teachers should challenge pupils to achieve their very best. You, your leaders and governors monitor carefully the progress pupils make, and promptly put in place extra support for those pupils who are not making the

progress that they should. You make sure that teachers consider pupils' starting points in their planning. This has been notably successful in mathematics, and consequently pupils make significantly more progress in mathematics than others nationally.

Since your appointment, you have been determined to make the school even better, responding well to the areas for improvement from the predecessor school's inspection report. You and your highly able deputy headteacher ensure that training constantly supports staff in becoming even more effective. Your middle leaders now play a key role in helping to improve teaching, by supporting and challenging teachers to deliver the new curriculum effectively. Teachers plan interesting lessons, which capture the interest of pupils. In mathematics in particular, teachers confidently support pupils' learning, so that pupils make good progress. Published information shows that progress and attainment in writing improved steadily from the previous inspection. However, last year, pupils in Year 6 did not make as much progress in writing as you expected. You have analysed the reasons for this and put in place actions which are further improving writing for current pupils.

Your forensic approach to school improvement means that you have accurately identified further areas which could be made better, and acted quickly to improve them. You were disappointed by recent key stage 2 results in reading and writing, correctly identifying, in particular, that pupils need to improve their vocabulary. You have promptly taken steps which are already leading to improvements in attainment for pupils currently in the school. This includes making sure children in the early years have more access to materials that help them to develop their reading and writing skills more quickly, and planning the curriculum so that pupils are introduced to more vocabulary as they progress through the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established a strong and highly effective culture of safeguarding in the school. All parents I spoke to agreed that their children are well looked after by the school. Leaders and governors have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have ensured that staff training in child protection is regular and thorough. Staff speak confidently about how to report any concerns, and records show that their concerns are taken seriously. Your pastoral support team works very well with families in the community. You use advice and support from outside agencies effectively, making sure that pupils get the care they need. Appropriate checks are made when vetting staff working in school, and records are clear and accurate. Pupils told me that they knew who to talk to if they had a problem. They appreciate the focus days, which remind them how to stay safe online and in their community.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, my focus areas were: how well the culture in the school promotes safeguarding; how effectively teachers are teaching writing and reading so that pupils make good progress; how well teachers plan to help pupils

make rapid progress from their different starting points; and how leaders make sure that pupils attend school regularly.

- School leaders have been highly successful in improving attendance so that it is now above national averages. The dedicated pupil support worker works closely with families to encourage more regular attendance. Pupils in school told me that they like the rewards they receive for good attendance. Your focus on improving the quality of teaching is also having an impact on attendance. One pupil said he came to school more regularly because 'lessons are fun and I like working'.
- Previously published results show that fewer pupils have achieved the expected standard in reading and writing compared with national levels. School leaders have responded swiftly to address this. Forensic evaluation of what pupils need to do to improve their skills has led to changes in how reading and writing are taught. Work in pupils' books shows that your increased focus on how to structure writing is helping to improve progress. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their love of reading, which pervades the school. Parents value the emphasis on practising spellings and reading for pleasure as homework. The school's information shows that these changes are already having an impact as an improved proportion of current pupils are achieving the expected standard in reading and writing.
- Last year, a larger proportion of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieved the highest standard of work compared with national levels. You have rightly identified that more middle-attaining pupils could achieve this high level. Your regular monitoring of pupils' progress and of teachers' planning is starting to help pupils make more rapid progress from their starting points, so that more pupils achieve highly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils are suitably challenged to move on rapidly from their starting points so that more pupils achieve the highest standards
- work to improve progress and attainment in reading and writing continues throughout the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Catherine Old
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, a group of middle leaders, governors and representatives from the University of Chichester Academy Trust. I visited classrooms to observe learning with you and your deputy headteacher. I listened to pupils reading and spoke to them about their learning and experiences in school. With a group of middle leaders, I reviewed work in a range of pupils' books. I talked with parents at the start of the day, and considered 13 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire. I took account of eight responses to the staff survey. I checked safeguarding arrangements. I reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policies and performance information for current pupils.