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Dear Mrs Fry

Short inspection of Pangbourne Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 July 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is despite some challenges to the staffing, typical of schools in the south east. You have done remarkably well to limit the impact on learning of staff illness and other unplanned absences. You are acutely aware of the anxiety this causes some parents and work closely with the chair of the governing body to find creative and lasting solutions as the need arises. A few parents expressed their concerns about this to me directly. You demonstrated clearly that any arrangements for covering teaching meet statutory requirements. I found no evidence that pupils' learning has been unduly held back in affected classes.

Senior leaders know the school and its pupils extremely well. This helps you plan teaching efficiently to meet pupils' diverse needs. You have developed a broad and balanced curriculum to support pupils' learning. You make good use of the site, including its extensive grounds and outside spaces. The 'secret garden' area, the field, Thames floodplain, and the wooded areas beyond, provide a rich environment for pupils to enjoy childhood and grow to understand the natural world. Staff make extremely good use of the indoor and outside learning spaces in the early years. Children move between the two, benefiting from a wide range of engaging activities. Adults support their learning by creating the activities and then prompting learning moments from the children while they are playing.

Children get off to a great start to their time in school in the early years. During that time they are taught well how to use phonics to support their reading. This continues in Year 1 so that most do well in the phonics screening check. By the end of Year 2, all pupils have met the required standard. Pupils read well by the end of key stage 1. This helps them access other parts of the curriculum. You showed me, for example, some strong examples of pupils' work in science.

Pupils like the many opportunities they have to participate in sporting activities. Governors ensure that good use is made of the primary physical education and sports funding so that pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and the benefits of competitive sport. Pupils also have opportunities to create, make and perform music. Parents contribute extensively to extra-curricular and community activities, most notably through their impressive fundraising efforts, including a fireworks display, the Pangbourne village fete and the organisation of a charitable 10k fun run.

The vast majority of pupils are extremely well-behaved. Their conduct around the school is good and stems from your high expectations and simple set of rules. For the most part, pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Teachers have well-rehearsed routines for their classrooms which mean that pupils know exactly what to do when given plain and simple instructions. Despite teachers' efforts and the consistent application of rules, a few pupils do not behave as well as they should. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met. You also work effectively to reduce the impact of any poor behaviour on other pupils' learning.

Along with the governors and the local authority, leaders have an accurate and realistic view of how well the school is doing. We agreed that not enough pupils in key stage 2 attain the higher levels of the national curriculum. There are very few pupils who work at greater depth in mathematics or English. As a result, published information about the relative rates of progress for pupils in the school indicates that performance in each subject is below the national average. This is most noticeable in the results of the teacher assessments of writing for Year 6 in 2015 and 2016.

At the last inspection you were asked to lift the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' learning, especially in writing and for the most able. You were also asked to reduce inconsistencies in the quality of marking so that teachers make clear to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. Ofsted no longer comments on marking. However, it was clear to me that teachers carefully assess pupils' work across the school and give them useful feedback. In many cases, basic mistakes were pointed out or suggestions given to make pupils' writing better, in keeping with the school's assessment policy.

We spent a lot of time exploring teachers' current methods to improve writing. In six of the seven lessons we visited, pupils were working on an aspect of written literacy. In all year groups, pupils were accurately describing the correct parts of speech and were fluent in using terms such as 'preposition', 'onomatopoeia' and

'fronted adverbials'. You showed me many examples of pupils' writing where they had used such language skilfully at a level suitable for their age. Some were exceeding these levels. Indeed, one child in Reception proudly showed me where she had written 'paramedic' on a homemade greetings card.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe at all times is highly effective. The leadership team insists that all the necessary processes and checks are carried out rigorously. Detailed records are kept of all training relating to safeguarding, and health and safety. Governors oversee this work and see that it is carried out to a good standard.

You also ensure that detailed risk assessments are carried out for all activities – including those where pupils might be in danger, for instance in the wooded areas or by the ponds. You ensure that the site is well maintained, clean and tidy, and that pupils treat it with respect. Staff ensure that pupils are safe at all times. Pupils say they feel safe and happy at the school and the vast majority of parents agree.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, as well as examining the school's current work to improve pupils' writing, I examined the strategies you have in place or are developing to support disadvantaged pupils. I looked at standards in mathematics, especially among those who should attain higher levels, and I looked at the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group varies but is rarely greater than five in any particular class. Consequently, it is impossible to make general comments about how well they are doing as a group. This is further complicated due to most having an additional barrier to learning. Some have special educational needs and/or disabilities and a few have social or emotional issues which have resulted in some delay to their learning. Others are hampered by weak attendance or poor behaviour.
- Leaders have detailed records of everything that the school does to reduce the impact on learning of any barriers. You showed me, for example, the highly effective work undertaken by some teaching assistants with individual pupils. This work is undoubtedly helping disadvantaged pupils to keep up or catch up with their peers.
- Leaders are increasingly focusing efforts on the most able pupils. You showed me examples of specific learning plans for these pupils. I looked at the results of a purposeful survey you conducted with pupils identified as gifted and talented. The results of this show such pupils' willingness and passion for learning. In lessons, some of the most able pupils contributed meaningfully to class discussions by using higher order vocabulary or the outcomes of detailed thinking. We agreed that there is a need for teachers to compare all pupils' work with as wide a group of teachers as possible. This should include those in schools outside West Berkshire so that staff have an even better understanding of the

characteristics of work assessed to be 'at greater depth' or exceeding age-expectations.

- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) provided me with detailed case study information about all the pupils who are receiving support. The school has developed expertise in early identification of undiagnosed conditions. The school has formed positive working relationships with a wide range of agencies, in the interests of supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The SENCo has been successful in providing evidence of the need for some pupils to go forward for statutory assessment. She has also been successful in enabling staff to reduce the support provided initially to a few pupils. This is because well-planned interventions have increased their independence. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to focus intently on further raising standards in pupils' writing
- an even greater proportion of pupils work at higher levels in English and greater depth in mathematics.

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 Berkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dr Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning jointly with you in every class, including the large early years area catering for three-, four- and five-year-olds. You led me on a tour of the school. I met with you and other leaders regularly throughout the day. I met a group of parents at short notice, took into account one anonymous letter delivered via the school, considered 44 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey tool, and 11 free-text responses from parents. I also met with members of the governing body. I spoke to many pupils informally and looked at a sample of their work. I took into account five responses to Ofsted's confidential pupil survey. I spoke with the whole staff and considered 19 responses to Ofsted's confidential online staff survey. I examined a wide range of the school's documentation, including leaders' own evaluation of the school's performance and the development plan.