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Mr Paul Hankey  
Executive Headteacher  
Tetsworth Primary School  
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Dear Mr Hankey

### **Short inspection of Tetsworth Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 September 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 June 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection and standards are improving. As executive headteacher you have improved the sharing of resources and ideas between the two schools of the federation and ensured that teachers are actively involved in a local Thame partnership of schools. This collaborative work and sharing of ideas has energised staff and brought about improvements to teaching and learning. Together with the head of learning, you provide drive, vision and clear leadership which is recognised and highly valued by staff, parents and the local authority. You both are highly ambitious for the pupils in your care. Having successfully expanded the school to incorporate Nursery provision, you are now determined to improve the quality of provision at Tetsworth still further. Pupils and parents are justly proud of the school and recognise these improvements. As one parent said, 'I love the caring attitude of this school and over the past couple of years everything seems to be getting better and better.'

Tetsworth is a small village school which offers a very nurturing and inclusive family atmosphere. Pupils are cheerful, ambitious and display very positive attitudes towards learning, their school and each other. They were keen to tell me, 'We are a small school with big ideas.' In class, pupils cheerfully engage in their tasks, taking pride in making their work the best it can be. From early years onwards the habits of good learning are established through a clear focus on effective teamwork and community. One parent spoke for many when they reported, 'My children are well

looked after and come home every day with new things to share and talk about. The school is very well run and I have 100% faith that my children have and have had the best start in life with Tetsworth School.'

During your last inspection, the inspector recognised the many strengths of your school, including: the high quality of teaching; the progress made by disadvantaged pupils; your provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; and the good behaviour of pupils. These continue to be key strengths of the school. The inspector also identified a need to improve the progress that the most able pupils make by making work more challenging and for teachers to give pupils more opportunities to be independent in their learning. Leaders and governors have responded well to these areas for improvement. As a result of leaders' training, teachers now have a more structured approach to small-group work which has enabled pupils to become more independent in their research skills and extended writing. However, you are aware that more still needs to be done to improve the level of challenge for the most able pupils in science and the wider curriculum.

Your self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning are robust, have clear targets and are appropriately focused. You have identified the correct priorities for further improvement and are taking the right actions to achieve them. You have prioritised raising standards in writing and mathematics and are aware that there is more to be done to ensure greater consistency of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. Subject leaders are highly motivated and have improved curriculum planning and outcomes in English and mathematics, particularly for upper key stage 2. However, you are aware that more needs to be done to support raising the level of challenge in younger year groups. This includes enriching the external learning environment in early years to promote more stimulating and deeper engagement in literacy and numeracy.

Governors are a professional and dedicated team with a detailed understanding of the school. They are kept well informed through regular visits to the school and via leaders' detailed tracking and assessment information. Governors are aware that the school's website currently contains information and policies that are out of date and so it does not meet the government's requirements. However, leaders and governors have clear plans in place to rectify this and are currently working to develop a new website.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that there is a culture of vigilance. Records are well maintained, detailed and of high quality. There are clear, well understood procedures in place to manage safeguarding requirements. All staff have up-to-date training to an appropriate level so they know what to do should they be worried about a pupil. Governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding and ensure that this aspect of the school's work is given high priority.

Very nearly all parents, and all of the staff who responded to the surveys, expressed

their belief that pupils are safe, well looked after and happy in school. Parents told me that they particularly appreciate how approachable staff are, enabling them to quickly raise any questions or concerns. School records for individual pupils show that your systems to raise and record concerns are secure and that the head of learning diligently liaises with outside agencies when necessary. Attendance has improved over time and is just below national figures. Leaders have been proactive in seeking guidance and support and in using a variety of appropriate strategies to ensure that attendance improves still further.

Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the site is very good; there are no concerns about bullying and incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Pupils take a pride in supporting each other and are confident that the adults in school will help them if they have any concerns. As one girl proudly told me, 'I like the fact that ours is a small school, you get more care.'

### **Inspection findings**

- During this visit, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision, including:
  - the progress pupils make as they progress from early years and through key stage 1
  - how effectively teaching and assessment systems ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points
  - the progress pupils make in writing, particularly at key stage 2
  - the quality of learning in the wider curriculum.
- Children's learning journey books evidence the strong progress that they make in early years from their starting points. Generally, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is in line with or above the national average figure. Children gain confidence from their good relationships with staff, and collaborative play with others in their class. The indoor environment offers a range of well-organised and stimulating learning opportunities. Leaders are aware that the outdoor learning areas are not as well resourced. More needs to be done to ensure that these areas offer a richer range of independent learning opportunities and incorporate more engaging literacy and numeracy prompts for the children.
- Year groups at the school are very small. This means that there can be variability in each year group and therefore caution is needed when making comparisons to national averages. Yet, historical progress information over time indicates that reading and mathematics skills are strong and pupils make progress in these areas at least in line with age-related expectations. Although attainment in writing dipped for key stage 2 pupils recently, this does not represent a trend and leaders are able to evidence the strong progress these small cohorts of pupils made from their starting points. The school's own assessment information shows that outcomes for key stage 1 in 2017 were particularly strong in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' improved assessment and tracking systems have enabled teachers and

teaching assistants to focus their interactions to support individual pupils' needs well. Consequently, all groups of current pupils make strong progress from their starting points and outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are improving.

- Leaders have provided staff with access to training and the sharing of resources across the two schools in the federation. As a result, pupils' books demonstrate that teachers' feedback to pupils became more effective last year and pupils are now routinely responding to feedback to improve their work. Across the school, teaching is now focused on improving handwriting skills and promoting reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Leaders are rightly prioritising ensuring greater consistency across the school and embedding these approaches so that even greater proportions of pupils can achieve the higher standard in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that a broad curriculum is in place and teachers plan engaging lessons around topics and themes which take pupils' interests into account. In addition, the curriculum is boosted by a wide variety of enrichment experiences. Pupils enthused about the wealth of sporting activities and clubs such as football, netball, rounders, swimming, cooking and singing. However, pupils' books show that teachers' expectations are not as consistently high in science and the wider curriculum as they are in English and mathematics. Pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are not set sufficiently challenging tasks which require them to think as deeply in science and the humanities as they do in English and mathematics. As a result, although enrichment is impressive, pupils' progress is not yet as well developed across the curriculum as it is in English and mathematics.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- regular challenge for the most able pupils is securely embedded across the school
- the external learning environment for early years is improved, to provide a wider range of resources and richer stimuli for developing literacy and mathematics
- the quality of pupils' work and their depth of thinking in science and the wider curriculum continues to improve; pupils should be given more challenging activities requiring them to apply their writing and mathematical skills in a subject-specific context.

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

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**  
**Information about the inspection**

I met with you and the head of learning, teachers and members of the governing body. I also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Together with the head of learning, we visited all three classrooms to look at teaching and learning. I considered a range of pupils' work in their exercise books. I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and around the school, and had a meeting with a small group of pupils to gather their views. I took into account 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as speaking to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. I also considered the views represented in 12 responses to a staff survey. I evaluated a range of documents, including pupils' progress information, leaders' self-evaluation documents, school improvement plans and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.