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Mrs Nikki Riches
Headteacher
Freegrounds Infant School
Hobb Lane
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Dear Mrs Riches

Short inspection of Freegrounds Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 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 May 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 and your senior leadership team share a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Your school's self-evaluation is accurate and your school improvement plan provides detailed strategies for the school's next steps. Consequently, you have secured sustained improvement in outcomes across the infant school and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. You have built a motivated staff team whose members work well together and who are proud to be members of the school community.

You and your staff promote a kind and nurturing atmosphere where pupils are happy and enjoy learning. Your school values – independence, teamwork, thinking, motivation, respect and engagement – are modelled effectively by you and your staff. When questioned, pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of the values and what each one means in practice in the life of the school. Pupils spoke animatedly about their curriculum and the learning opportunities provided for them. They especially enjoy trips out of school, and were keen to talk about these experiences. Pupils behave well and show care and courtesy to staff and their classmates.

Parents are very enthusiastic about the school. One parent commented that school leaders ensure that there are good systems in place for communication between

school and parents. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, felt that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. Almost all feel that their children are taught well and would recommend the school to another parent.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the use of information and communication technology. Subsequently, the work of the deputy headteacher to increase pupils' opportunities to access learning through technology has worked well. For example, during the inspection, children in early years used tablets independently to enhance their learning. In Year 1, a range of interactive resources was used on the electronic white-board to support pupils' learning in phonics. In Year 2, teachers used video clips to engage pupils in their work about The Titanic.

You have taken effective action on other areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. Phonics is now taught consistently well in all classes. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to apply their phonics skills independently, when writing in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Children in early years access high-quality learning experiences in their outdoor area. Opportunities to practise skills in English and mathematics are wide and varied.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were also asked to develop the impact of subject leaders. You have ensured that subject leaders take full responsibility for their designated areas of the curriculum. Supported well by you and your senior colleagues, subject leaders are provided with time to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in each subject effectively. Teachers attend training to enhance their skills and subject knowledge. All teachers who completed the staff questionnaire felt that school leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support their ongoing improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your senior leaders ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and regularly check on the quality of safeguarding procedures, including the vetting of adults who work in the school. All members of staff are clear about safeguarding procedures, including arrangements for reporting concerns. This enables you to make referrals to other agencies in a timely manner when the need arises. All staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training to ensure that they are up to date with the latest regulations.

Pupils have a clear understanding about how to keep themselves safe at school, at home and when on the internet. Pupils were keen to express how they are able to talk to their teachers if they have a concern or a worry. They say that teachers will 'always listen to them'.

Attendance is improving year on year. You are unrelenting in your work to engage with and support families, promoting the importance of regular attendance and

punctuality. You are proactive in seeking advice from external agencies when attendance is potentially a barrier to learning. This has been highly effective for some pupils, whose attendance has improved significantly.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I evaluated pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 and the consistency of achievement of boys, girls and disadvantaged pupils.
- Outcomes in reading have been above the national average for the past three years. Pupils are surrounded by text and have a wide range of books to choose from. The teaching of phonics is regular and consistently meets the needs of children in early years and pupils in key stage 1. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils pass the phonics screening check in Year 1 than other pupils nationally. Teachers use high-quality texts to stimulate and enthuse pupils so that they become immersed in their learning. Regular tracking of pupils' progress in reading enables teachers to plan next steps and interventions. This ensures that no pupil is allowed to fall behind. Consequently, pupils make good progress in reading.
- In 2017, pupils' progress in writing from some starting points was less than expected. As a result, you have rightly identified writing as an area for development. You and your assistant headteacher have a clear plan of action to address this shortfall so that pupils make fast progress. Your assistant headteacher works alongside colleagues to ensure that planning meets the needs of all pupils and provides the right amount of challenge for all levels of ability. Recently introduced procedures to more routinely assess pupils enable teachers to precisely identify pupils' next steps. Current school information shows that pupils have made good progress since the start of the year. Workbooks scrutinised during the inspection provided additional evidence that pupils are now making good progress. However, leaders are accurate in ensuring that this sharp focus continues.
- In 2016, some pupils made less than expected progress in mathematics from their starting points. However, the recent changes that you and your deputy headteacher have made to the teaching of mathematics have had a big impact. You have adopted an inclusive approach to teaching which you consider has enabled teachers to make secure assessments of pupils' understanding and to plan accurate next steps. School data provides further evidence that these changes have rapidly improved pupils' progress in this subject. Additionally, provisional outcomes for the mathematics test in 2017 indicate that pupils made good progress from their starting points.
- In 2016, boys achieved better than girls in writing and mathematics. You and your senior leaders were quick to address this to improve outcomes for girls. You made changes to how the progress of individual pupils is monitored and evaluated to ensure that the right level of challenge is in place for all pupils. As a result, school information and provisional test outcomes in 2017 showed that girls had caught up with boys.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. You and your inclusion manager have rightly identified that some disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs and much is in place to ensure that these pupils receive the very best education possible. As a result, the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of others are diminishing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable in key stage 1, particularly in writing.

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

Luisa Gould
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and a group of governors. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. Together, you and I planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. Jointly, we visited all classes in early years and key stage 1. Alongside your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, I scrutinised a range of pupils' books in English and mathematics. With you and your inclusion manager, I evaluated progress information for current pupils and your view of the school's effectiveness. I considered 52 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as talking to parents at the start of the day. I talked to a group of pupils and considered their views about their school. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including policies and procedures, and minutes from governing body meetings. I met with your administration officer to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding processes, including scrutinising the procedures for the vetting and recruitment of staff.