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Ms Kerenza Gwynn
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Gwynn

Short inspection of Naphill and Walters Ash School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 February 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 provide high-quality and effective leadership, which is creative and sometimes challenges the norm. For example, all staff contribute to the school's development plan as a working document which is placed on the staff room wall so that every member of staff understands how well the school is doing and where extra work is needed. Staff value the fact that you listen to them and they feel part of what is clearly a very strong team.

You skilfully use the talents of your senior leadership team to improve teaching, learning and assessment across the school to raise standards. All leaders articulate your shared vision very clearly and have accurate views about what the school does well and what could be even better. You give leaders clear objectives, high-quality professional development and time to do their jobs well. You understand that these leaders are all at different stages in their development, and you plan accordingly to work as a team to become even more strategic in your approach to school improvement.

Your work is highly valued by all. The large majority of parents are very positive about the school and your leadership. As one parent noted, 'The headteacher and deputy show very strong leadership and this provides an environment where there is a lot of respect and the children can achieve.'

This is a school where the welfare of pupils is very important. Staff go the extra mile to

support pupils and their families. You know your pupils and families extremely well, including those who join the school at different times in the year and in different year groups. Your special educational needs coordinator, family liaison officer and behaviour support teacher work very closely with pupils and their families to offer additional high-quality support to meet individual pupils' needs. Pupils told me how this helps them to become better and more confident learners. They know there is always someone to talk to who will listen and help them, and consequently they feel very safe at school.

Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for things which can make the school even better. The junior leadership team feels valued by staff, and its members know that their views are important. For example, members of the media team enjoy writing their blog and contributing to the Naphill Gazette because they want the wider community to know what goes on in their good school.

The leader of the early years ensures that children get a very good start to their school life. The proportion of children, including those who are disadvantaged, who achieve a good level of development at the end of the early years is consistently above that found nationally.

At the time of the last inspection, you were asked to secure even better progress and raise standards, especially in writing, and to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. Since the last inspection, improvements in the quality of teaching have led to significant improvements in reading and mathematics. For example, pupils' outcomes in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 are significantly higher at both the expected and higher standards than for other pupils nationally. Pupils make good progress in their writing at key stage 2 and any gaps in achievement are reducing. There are currently more pupils in key stage 2 working at a greater depth of knowledge and understanding in writing, because of the outstanding teaching they receive.

Your current plans for improvement rightly focus on increasing the proportion of all pupils working at the expected standard and at 'greater depth' in writing by the end of key stage 1. Through careful monitoring of teaching, and management of performance, you know where weaker teaching needs to be challenged to enable improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

The overall culture in the school gives safeguarding the highest priority. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. You have adopted very practical and simple systems, allowing all staff to report any concerns swiftly. Senior leaders hold regular meetings with staff to exchange key information about pupils and families. These opportunities are also used to check that the school's safeguarding procedures are well understood and are put into practice daily.

Your team is not afraid to challenge other professional agencies when it is appropriate to do so. Leaders are strong advocates for children and their families. Leaders know and use local agreements for when pupils are moving between schools, ensuring that pupils do not go missing from education. They keep thorough records, which are efficiently passed to

other schools. This is particularly important as the school has a higher than average turnover of pupils.

Governors have established a very effective safeguarding working group to review policies and procedures and to check that all staff understand what to do to keep pupils safe. Their work contributes significantly to keeping all pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I looked at: the procedures used to support disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils; the impact of leaders' work on improving teaching and outcomes in writing and phonics; and how well parents are kept informed of the progress their children make.
- You know your disadvantaged pupils very well, and during the inspection clear evidence was available to show the levels of support that staff give to them. These pupils are currently making good progress, and leaders are working successfully to raise their attainment further. At the start of the inspection, the school had not published online a pupil premium strategy regarding the spending of external funding to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. I discussed this with you and your governors to ensure that the website is updated.
- A significant amount of work has been undertaken since the previous inspection to improve the teaching of reading and mathematics across the school. Pupils now have a better understanding of these subjects and how they are useful to them. Currently, the majority of pupils are working at least in line with the levels expected for their age and are making at least good progress.
- The English coordinator is very clear about what needs to be done to improve pupils' writing. She works hard to support and coach other members of staff, and this is helping pupils to develop their confidence and extend their writing skills across the curriculum. The coordinator uses her current assessment expertise to check that accurate judgements are being made about pupils' achievement. With the leadership team, she makes good use of published progress and attainment information, alongside the school's own information, to drive improvements.
- Where teaching is outstanding, pupils are keen and able writers. Two key stage 2 pupils spoke enthusiastically about writing Arthurian legends. They told me about 'slow writing', which helps them to consider every aspect of their work and edit and improve it as it develops. Pupils work with their teacher to develop very good resources all around their classroom, which help them to improve their writing. For example, they enjoyed writing a 500-word story and showed me the selection of words on their wall to help them write imaginatively. Pupils told me that they like being challenged by their teacher. In some lessons, these high expectations of pupils are missing.
- Pupils and parents spoke enthusiastically about the school's policy for using 'teacher time', when every pupil works directly with the teacher and benefits from immediate feedback. As a result, pupils are very engaged in their learning and want to do the best they can.
- The early years provides numerous creative opportunities for children to develop as good communicators. Children quickly learn the skills for becoming confident speakers,

readers and writers. This was evident in their sentences explaining, for example, 'what happened to the troll after he fell into the water', where the sentences were creative and well written, with every example being different. For example, one child wrote that 'the troll goes to eat pasta'! Leaders are rightly considering how this good progress in writing can be maintained across all classes in key stage 1.

- You have correctly identified that the proportion of pupils on track to meet the expected and higher standards in writing at the end of the school year needs to increase. You know where teaching is weaker and you plan to support senior leaders to challenge any underperformance quickly.
- Too few pupils meet the expected standard in phonics outcomes at the end of Year 1 and Year 2. Although outcomes have improved over the past four years, they have not improved quickly enough. The key stage 1 leader has a clear plan of action and has provided additional resources to help pupil outcomes to improve.
- The key stage 1 leader has also delivered training to teaching assistants to help them support pupils' phonic development. As a result, teaching assistants' knowledge and understanding of teaching phonics has improved considerably.
- The teaching of phonics at key stage 1 does not always help pupils make good progress. For example, the most able pupils do not always receive the level of challenge that will help them to extend their learning. Pupils do not always use and apply well the skills they have been taught.
- Parents have a good understanding of the progress their children make at school because leaders send clear information home and hold various meetings for parents throughout the year. Parents can now access Department for Education performance tables via the school's website, and the information is currently being updated. Parents are encouraged to ask for information, and most do so. The large majority of parents feel that the school communicates with them effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they support teachers to develop consistently high-quality teaching of writing and phonics to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able pupils and those who are disadvantaged
- they develop their skills and have a strategic overview of learning across the school
- they challenge any underperformance more effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Varnom
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your welfare team, your senior leadership team, four governors and a representative from the local authority. I read the 75 responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to 12 parents as they brought their children to school. I read the 16 responses from staff to Ofsted's online survey and considered 19 responses to the online pupil survey. I visited a number of classrooms with your key stage leaders, and visited some classrooms on my own. Together with key stage leaders I closely scrutinised pupils' books.

I spoke to pupils about their learning, interviewed two Year 5 girls specifically about their writing and spoke to the junior leadership team to gather their views about the school. In addition, I considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding records and policies, the school's monitoring records, attendance information and minutes of governing body meetings. Once the pupil premium and sports premium reviews are uploaded on to the website, the school will meet the requirements on the publication of specified information.