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Mrs Andrea Keith  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Keith

### **Short inspection of Cradle Hill Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2018, 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 March 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. Since taking over as acting headteacher you have made a positive impact on pupils, staff, parents and carers. You know the school well, have an encouraging, enthusiastic approach, and have already made some changes for the better. One member of staff commented, 'She has opened a new door of opportunities for children and staff alike.'

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the way that teachers bring learning to life and help pupils to achieve well. One parent said, 'My children love learning... Staff deliver the curriculum in a fun and engaging way.' Pupils agree that lessons are enjoyable because staff make learning interesting and challenging. Pupils behave well and show kindness and thoughtfulness to each other. They have complete confidence in staff to sort out any issues that arise. Staff also have high expectations of pupils and most fallings out or disagreements are quickly sorted out by pupils themselves.

The staff team is strong and united, so morale is very high. All staff agree that they feel proud to be part of the team and enjoy working at the school. One staff member commented, 'It is a privilege and a pleasure to work here.' Staff at all levels have many opportunities to develop their skills through regular, personalised training and professional development. Leaders have developed a team of staff with a wealth of talent in a range of areas. Senior leaders use teachers' skills and knowledge to improve teaching, sharpen assessment practice

and accelerate pupils' progress across the school. You are outward looking and provide staff with opportunities to share their expertise by supporting other local schools.

Governors know the school well, drawing on a range of sources of information to reach an accurate view of it. They have a good mixture of skills, including those in finance and education. Governors are ambitious and offer the right balance of support and challenge. Senior leaders acknowledge that governors would be strengthened further if the school's pupil tracking system provided governors with more information about the progress of groups of pupils.

At the previous inspection, senior leaders were asked to improve teaching in the school. Leaders have fully addressed the issues raised. Staff are particularly skilled at assessing pupils' learning during lessons and responding appropriately when pupils find work too easy or start to struggle. Where necessary, staff arrange for extra teaching to help pupils master the new idea before the next lesson. Inspectors also asked leaders to develop pupils' accurate use of grammar in all their subjects. Written work in pupils' books gives clear evidence of the improved accuracy in the use of grammar and punctuation in pupils' writing.

You recognise that there is still work to be done to ensure that the school's website – including the pupil premium strategy – meets statutory requirements.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. As a result, pupils feel safe in school. Pupils have a very clear understanding of bullying, but say that it only happens rarely and is quickly dealt with by staff.

All staff are clear about the signs that might indicate that a pupil is at risk and understand how to report any concerns that they have, including using the newly introduced online system. Detailed policies and procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. Regular training means that staff understand and implement key aspects of safeguarding. Governors play an important role in checking that staff records are accurate as well as verifying that other important aspects of safeguarding, such as health and safety, are in place.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to consider four key lines of enquiry. The first of these explored how well teaching enables the most able pupils to achieve the high standards of which they are capable. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the greater depth standards at the end of Year 6 was below that seen nationally. However, a greater proportion of pupils currently in the school are on track to achieve the higher standards. This is so in all year groups. Evidence in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils, including many of the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress in writing and mathematics. Leaders rightly attribute

this to good-quality teaching that engages pupils' interest and sets high levels of expectation. When the most able pupils have mastered the skill being taught, they are quickly provided with challenging work to extend and apply their skills in different contexts.

- The second key line of enquiry investigated the progress that pupils make in writing, especially in key stage 2. Senior leaders have harnessed the considerable amount of expertise among staff in the school in teaching and assessing writing. Pupils currently in key stage 2 are making strong progress. We saw many examples of pupils of all attainment levels developing greater accuracy and fluency in their writing. This is because teachers introduce pupils to high-quality texts to inspire them and provide helpful examples for them to follow. As a result, pupils develop their own voice and style in writing, while at the same time becoming more accurate and adventurous in their use of spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Third, we looked at how effectively leaders and governors use the pupil premium funding to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. We agreed that disadvantaged pupils achieved less well than other pupils in school and other pupils nationally in most subjects in 2017. You also acknowledge that the pupil premium funding statement does not meet statutory requirements, as it does not identify barriers to learning. Neither does it explain the reasons for the spending or evaluate its impact.
- Leaders and staff know pupils well, including disadvantaged pupils, and provide support to help most achieve successfully. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' levels of attainment and set challenging targets for individuals. However, leaders do not track the attainment or progress of groups of pupils other than those in Years 2 and 6 because the school's tracking system does not enable them to do so. This severely restricts their ability to evaluate the impact of their actions to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, evidence seen in books shows clearly that most disadvantaged pupils across the school are making good progress. Some are making rapid progress, including some of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Finally, we examined the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders recognise that in the past these pupils' attendance has not been high enough. Senior leaders have worked hard to raise the levels of attendance by rewarding regular attendance at school and constantly reminding parents of the importance of being at school on time every day. Pupils understand the acronym HERO (Here Every day Ready On time.) As a result, the attendance in school has improved and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved even more this year. However, despite clear evidence of the disproportionate impact of small numbers of pupils with significant medical needs, the attendance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is still low.
- We discussed your school's website, which is missing several documents, including a strategy for the spending of pupil premium funding. Some out-of-date policies and specific information about the spending of the physical education and sport premium for primary schools require attention. Consequently, the

school's website does not fully comply with the statutory requirements regarding what schools should publish on their website.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress across all groups and years is rapid by implementing a pupil-tracking system that enables leaders to track and evaluate the attainment and progress of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able
- the pupil premium strategy meets statutory requirements by including the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils and the impact of the pupil premium spending on pupils' outcomes, including their attendance
- the school website meets all statutory requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Bruce Waelend  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, other leaders and four members of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. Together with the deputy headteacher, we visited classes from all year groups in the school to look at teaching and learning. We looked at pupils' work. I met with a group of four middle leaders. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and had a meeting with a group of 10 pupils from Years 2 to 6. Thirty-four responses to the staff survey and 122 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 81 written comments, were taken into account. I spoke to several parents at the beginning of the day. Some of the documents I scrutinised included the school's self-evaluation documents, the school's pupil-tracking information and the school's development plan. I examined the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.