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Mrs Corrina Gillard
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Gillard

Short inspection of Emmbrook Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 20 March, 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated very strong practice in specific areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, you have secured a culture where all staff and governors share your ambitious vision for Emmbrook Infant School. This vision incorporates setting aspirations for high achievement while ensuring that everyone is valued equally. You and your team are focused clearly on securing excellence, so that pupils achieve their full potential and are successful in their next stage of learning. You have created a happy and purposeful school where pupils relish learning. High-quality learning experiences go hand in hand with promoting pupils' safety and welfare.

Areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection have been met in full and, as governors have recognised, are now 'a strength of the school'. As a result of leaders' actions, pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly. The vast majority of pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A high number of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve standards above those expected for their age. Behaviour has improved because leaders have developed

consistently high expectations and involved pupils in producing the school's 'golden rules', which they understand and adhere to.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to their learning. They are proud of the school's values, which are firmly rooted in the school vision of 'Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM)'. Pupils seek to embody this mantra into their actions. Pupils are polite, confident, considerate and welcoming. They respect each other's ideas and collaborate very well, seeking to resolve any issues arising before approaching an adult. Pupils explained to me how they focus on a value each month, providing examples of where they had been rewarded for demonstrating a core value such as curiosity or honesty. Pupils speak with pride about their considerable achievements which include, for example, creating the Amazon River in the early years outdoor classroom, solving challenging problems in mathematics, and their enthusiastic performances in class assemblies.

Staff, parents and carers, pupils and governors are all highly appreciative of your inspirational leadership and rightly hold you in high regard. All staff share your aspirations and high expectations. They constantly reflect on their practice and work collaboratively to improve outcomes for your pupils. Parents feel confident about your 'strong leadership' and describe you as 'professional and approachable' at all times. They describe the school as 'an excellent nurturing school that supports pupils to the best of their abilities' and as a place where children thrive academically with a rounded and full curriculum. Parents also value the enthusiasm of their children, who 'dash into school as soon as the doors open'. They also recognise the confidence their children have gained in their learning and social development. This is a vibrant, welcoming school where pupils, parents and staff have a true sense of belonging and are proud to play their part. Both staff and parents described the sense of family within the school.

You identify precisely the school's main strengths and those areas that could be further enhanced. For example, you know that most-able pupils could achieve even more in some subjects. Helpful work to address this is already under way through subject leaders' action plans across the wider curriculum. You have gathered first-hand information to inform your judgements, wisely involving other leaders and governors in monitoring activities. As a result, everyone is clear about how the school can improve further, and leaders are taking the right actions to make these improvements.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that pupils' safety has the highest priority. There is an exceptionally strong culture of safeguarding that runs throughout the school. Pupils and parents recognise and value this. You know the pupils and families well, and staff are confident to raise any concerns with you in the knowledge that these will be addressed swiftly. You engage determinedly with external agencies and provide support for pupils who are vulnerable. Policies and processes are secure. Record

keeping is extensive and detailed. Efficient systems ensure that there is a clear and constant awareness of the chronology of any concerns. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when accessing the internet.

Governors regularly check the effectiveness of the school's work to keep pupils safe, including speaking to pupils. Governors are aware that pupils understand that fire drills and lock-down procedures contribute to keeping them safe. Staff and governors take their responsibilities to look after children very seriously. They receive appropriate and timely training about what they need to know and are knowledgeable about the safeguarding policies of the school.

Inspection findings

- Leaders check that additional funding is used well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive highly tailored support at the right times. Systematic liaison between parents and staff underpins this work effectively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly and their attainment has risen steeply.
- The rich, vibrant and exciting curriculum is a key strength of the school. Although the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is given rightful priority, this is not at the expense of learning across a broad range of other subjects. Staff make careful and appropriate links between subjects to help learning become memorable and make sense for pupils. For example, a recent trip to Hampton Court generated a greater understanding of the use of bricks in creating patterns as well as enabling skilfully written accounts of the trip.
- Governors are well informed and have an excellent overview of the school's effectiveness. They monitor school performance closely, gathering first-hand information to inform their discussions and decisions so that they can hold leaders to account. Governors share your vision and purpose for the school, challenging school leaders to be outward-looking. Governors also keep a close eye on pupil premium funding and are rigorous in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils learn well.
- Pupils make good gains in their learning, including those children in the early years. Teachers use accurate assessment information of pupils' learning to plan sequences of lessons that give pupils the skills and knowledge needed to be successful. They routinely identify where any pupils are less confident in their learning and provide additional support to ensure that progress is secured. Pupils are regularly challenged to explain their reasoning and also to improve their work. Pupils say that 'sometimes different things are hard' but that 'it makes your brain grow when you learn from mistakes.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils, including the most able, continue to make strong progress and deepen their learning, especially in the wider curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Johns
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with you and your deputy, I visited all classes to look at learning and talk to pupils about their work. I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation and met with a group of leaders to discuss the progress pupils are making and plans for improvement. I met with six governors, including the chair of governors, and with the school's local authority school improvement officer. I discussed the provision and progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with the school's SEN coordinator and the teacher in charge of the school's hearing impairment resource base. I met with a group of pupils and discussed their work. I also spoke to pupils informally in class and around school. I considered the views of 48 parents through their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I spoke to several parents before the start of school and took account of the 46 free-text responses submitted. I took account of the responses from 15 staff and 69 pupils who responded to the Ofsted questionnaires. I reviewed a range of documents, including safeguarding information, the school's checks on the suitability of staff to work with children and other school policies and records.