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Mrs Emma Clark
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Clark

Short inspection of Hale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 September 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since you became the executive headteacher in April 2016, you have overseen a number of staffing changes, including the very recent appointment of a new head of school. You have a clear and accurate view of what the school does well and what could be even better. Your drive for continuous improvement has ensured that this is a good and improving school.

You have effectively addressed the areas for improvement that inspectors identified in the previous inspection report. By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in writing is now in line with the proportion achieving the expected standard in both reading and mathematics. Leaders were also asked to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. Teachers value and support the opportunities they are given to improve their practice, for example by working alongside subject leaders from other schools. Your own records indicate that teaching is now more effective than in the past.

Governors know the school well. They have a good overview of its priorities and offer appropriate challenge. For example, they recently have challenged leaders about how they will increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher standards by the end of Year 6. They are very supportive of your leadership and describe you as a 'highly strategic leader who strives to get the best out of staff and pupils alike'.

It was a pleasure meeting and talking with your pupils. They are confident, friendly, and keen to talk about their school. Pupils say that, because of the size of the school, everyone knows each other, they look out for one another and get along well. They also told me that they enjoy coming to school because the teachers are friendly and lessons are fun.

Most parents are highly supportive of the school. For example, parents gave their view that the school is 'a lovely little school' with 'staff who inspire with their enthusiasm and commitment'. The vast majority said that they would recommend the school to another parent.

You correctly identified the need to improve attendance, particularly of pupils who were persistently absent from school. Your robust action has ensured that the attendance of these pupils has now improved. Currently, attendance figures for all pupils are above the national average.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. You, staff and governors have a strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils are safe. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that they are up to date with safeguarding issues. In addition, staff talk through 'What if?' scenarios during staff meetings to ensure that they remain vigilant and understand the need to report any concerns quickly.

Governors closely monitor the school's safeguarding work. They regularly hold meetings with members of staff and pupils to ensure that they know what to do in a variety of situations, for example, where pupils should go in the event of a fire. They regularly audit the single central register and policies.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. Pupils are taught to be safe in a variety of situations. For example, they know how to stay safe on the internet or around the cows and horses, which sometimes interrupt their lunchtimes.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; pupils' progress in writing; the progress of disadvantaged and the most able disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; and whether the curriculum provided is broad and balanced, and accessible to all.
- Leaders identified that pupils' progress in writing, although broadly in line with the national average, was not as rapid as the progress made in reading or mathematics. Leaders and governors also felt that a greater proportion of pupils were capable of achieving the higher standards in writing in both Year 2 and Year 6. As a result, with the commissioned support of a literacy adviser and expertise from within the federation, leaders have restructured the way that writing is taught across the school. High-quality texts and text extracts have been used to

'hook' pupils' interest, and they are given many opportunities to write at length and practise their skills in other curriculum areas. For example, pupils studying the Tudors used a balanced argument to decide if Henry VIII would make a good headteacher! Year 6 pupils, whom I spoke to during the visit, said that they now enjoy writing because it is taught in an 'interesting and fun way' and that they find that most of the texts they read, although quite 'challenging', are 'interesting'. School assessment information, work in books and displays around the school show that most pupils are now making strong progress in writing. However, leaders recognise that opportunities for the most able to extend their learning are sometimes missed and have started to address this.

- There are very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils at the school. Similarly, there are few pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As leaders pointed out during the inspection, it is very difficult to compare these pupils with the national picture. However, as a result of careful monitoring, focused support and interventions tailored to pupils' needs, work in books and school progress information show that over time most of these pupils make similar or better progress from their starting points compared to other pupils.
- Leaders have developed a varied and rich curriculum. A recent review of the curriculum has resulted in more links being made between subjects. This has enabled pupils to practise skills in other areas. For example, I observed mathematics measuring skills being applied through a science experiment. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the trips and activities that support their learning. For instance, pupils spoke about Titanic Day and how they had learned a dance, had tea, written a postcard home and, after disaster had struck, how they used persuasion to be allowed on the lifeboat. They felt that this had really helped them to understand what it would have been like to be on the Titanic. Although coverage of the curriculum is carefully monitored, at present, leaders and staff do not have a clear picture of pupils' progress across the foundation subjects. Leaders and governors are aware of this and have identified it as an area for development during the next academic year.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs on offer at the school, some of which are run by pupils. During my visit, sewing club and mythology club were on offer at lunchtime. Pupils plan these sessions, ensure that the resources are available and talk through each session with a member of staff before starting. Sport also has a high profile at the school with the school competing and being successful in many local competitions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching of writing deepens and extends learning for the most able and the most able disadvantaged so that more of these pupils attain the higher standards
- the progress of all pupils across all subjects is tracked and monitored to enable leaders to have an accurate understanding of pupils' progress in subjects other than mathematics and English.

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

Brian Macdonald
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and the head of school on several occasions throughout the day to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together we observed learning and looked at pupils' work. I met with a group of governors including the chair of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I looked at the school's documentation relating to governance, safeguarding and pupils' progress and attainment. I took account of 75 responses to the online pupil survey and spoke to pupils both in the classroom and at play. I considered the 16 survey responses submitted by staff and the 70 parent responses to Ofsted's confidential online survey, Parent View. I also spoke to several parents before school and considered 39 free-text responses submitted via Parent View.