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Mrs Julie O'Mara  
Headteacher  
Chase Lane Primary School and Nursery  
Chase Lane  
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Dear Mrs O'Mara

### **Short inspection of Chase Lane Primary School and Nursery**

Following my visit to the school on 14 June 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 December 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 your appointment as headteacher in January 2016, you have been clear about the need to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. You have been ably supported in this work by your deputy headteacher. In particular, you have raised expectations about what pupils can achieve, and improved the level of challenge which teachers include when planning their lessons. This work has sometimes been challenging, and there has inevitably been a certain amount of staff turnover. Nevertheless, leaders have taken opportunities to develop teachers' skills and to appoint new teachers quickly when vacancies have arisen.

You have also made good use of the effective support offered by the local authority. For example, the school's participation in the 'School Effectiveness Plus' programme has helped leaders develop new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. The school's own information about the achievement of its current pupils shows that pupils are making good progress. Any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified, and the good support available ensures that they can quickly catch up. Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons during the inspection confirms that pupils are doing well and enjoying their learning.

The school's previous inspection identified that the contribution of phase leaders

was underdeveloped. You have given this improvement work a high priority and, as a result, phase leaders are now highly influential in supporting school improvement across each key stage. Phase leaders ensure that teachers are appropriately challenged and supported in their professional development and that good standards of pupils' learning and personal development are maintained.

Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school, recognising the good progress their children make and appreciating the support, help and availability of teachers and leaders whenever they have something to discuss. The parents I spoke to informally at the start of the day, and those who responded to Ofsted's online text questionnaire, are very happy with the school. Typical comments included, 'My child loves the Nursery, and she is already learning about phonics and making good progress writing her letters', and, 'Teachers keep a close eye on my son because he has particular needs and they make sure he is well supported.' Parents also recognise that staff are proactive, approachable and supportive, and they appreciate that leaders have created a positive climate in which everyone can flourish.

Particular strengths of the school include the teaching of French, physical education (PE), music and computing. In addition, the well-planned support available for vulnerable pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities helps to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils all have their own 'proud folders', encouraging them to celebrate their achievements and increase their self-confidence.

Pupils behave well in lessons, responding positively to their learning activities, which they find interesting and stimulating. Behaviour around school is also good. Pupils are polite to each other and chatty yet respectful to adults.

Governors, many of whom are new to their roles, ensure that they understand the needs, strengths and priorities of the school well. They ask appropriately challenging questions of senior leaders. They also fully support your drive to bring about further improvements to pupils' progress and outcomes, especially for the most able pupils.

You are ambitious for the school to continue to improve, and you have plans to build on recent advances. You accept that information from national assessments at the end of key stage 2 shows that not enough most-able pupils have made as much progress as they could in English and mathematics. You are rightly keen that more pupils should achieve at greater depth by the time they leave the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are well organised, securely maintained and fit for purpose. Records of adults' suitability to work with children are clear and comprehensive. The designated safeguarding governor carries out regular monitoring activities to ensure that systems are robust. Teachers and support staff understand their roles in keeping pupils safe at school, and they

understand how to report any concerns. You and your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), who is also a designated safeguarding leader, liaise effectively with other agencies, ensuring that concerns are followed up quickly. When the need arises, you seek advice in a timely manner from specialist child protection advisers. The pupils I spoke to informally around the school told me that they feel safe and happy at school. Parents confirmed that pupils are well looked after and well cared for at school.

## **Inspection findings**

- In order to ascertain whether the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. The first of these was about the steps leaders are taking to improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics in key stage 2, especially that of the most able pupils. In the 2016 and the 2017 key stage 2 tests, pupils' performance indicated that they had made broadly similar progress in these subjects to pupils nationally. Some of the most able pupils had not made as much progress as expected, and the proportion of pupils achieving at the highest level was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This was also the case in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test. You are rightly keen to improve this situation. Consequently, you have introduced new approaches to the teaching of spelling, reading and mathematics. I asked you please to continue this work in order to improve progress and outcomes by the time pupils leave Year 6.
- The new format for teaching mathematics, which you introduced in September 2016, gives increased emphasis to mathematical reasoning. Teachers ensure that pupils use equipment and diagrams to visualise mathematical problems and solve abstract challenges. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were successfully using apparatus to model word problems involving a mixture of subtraction and division skills. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were enjoying solving fraction problems by drawing charts and bars to represent sections of a pizza. In both lessons, learners, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able, were making good progress, fulfilling the good level of expectation set by their teachers.
- In English, a new phonics scheme and new approaches to the teaching of reading and writing have been introduced. Pupils now benefit from increased opportunities to talk about their work and to practise their skills more extensively, both orally and in writing. In one Year 5 lesson, pupils were collaborating most effectively to produce exciting work using emotive phrases to persuade others to visit their school fete. One pupil wrote engagingly, 'I urge you to avoid disappointment. You will be devastated to miss out on this wonderful opportunity.'
- It is clear that the measures you have taken to increase the level of challenge and expectation in lessons, coupled with new strategies to support lesson planning, are impacting positively on the progress current pupils are making. You accept that you need to ensure that this work continues in order to improve outcomes at the end of key stage 2, and particularly so that more pupils can achieve at the highest level in their national assessments.
- My next line of enquiry was about pupils' attendance, which has been slightly

below the national average for the last three years. In 2017, the percentage of pupils who were persistently absent increased to above the national average for the first time. You are well aware of this and you have implemented a range of measures designed to promote good attendance. You and your attendance officer meet regularly to review the attendance of specific pupils. You are in regular contact with families in which attendance is low and you ensure that school attendance rules are implemented and appropriate sanctions are taken where necessary.

- The school's attendance information for this current academic year shows that your work is having a positive impact and you have clear plans in place to continue monitoring the situation.
- My final line of enquiry was about the quality of the school's wider curriculum, and the progress pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics. Where the school has particular strengths, this is often as a result of the excellent contribution made by subject specialists. Examples include music, which extends to the excellent development of the school's band, French in which the teacher plans lessons to include the topic work undertaken in each class, and PE in which pupils are taking part in more competitions and being introduced to more sports than ever before.
- When we looked at pupils' books together, you agreed that work is generally well presented, although opportunities for pupils to write at depth in subjects such as history and geography are inconsistent. Currently, not all teachers are doing enough to ensure that topic work is completed to the same high standard or that enough opportunities are taken to deepen pupils' thinking.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic, happy to support colleagues and keen to improve outcomes in their areas. Nevertheless, there is scope for their roles to develop further, so that their contribution can be more robustly focused on monitoring and ensuring depth and quality of work in their subjects.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve progress and outcomes in English and mathematics, especially for the most able pupils, by embedding recent, new approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics
- teachers all share the same high expectations about the depth and quality of pupils' written work in subjects other than English and mathematics
- subject leaders' roles are developed so that they can monitor progress and outcomes more closely and promote high standards across the 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 Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Nicholas Rudman  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the school's priorities for development and the impact of actions taken since the previous inspection.

I met the leaders who have responsibility for mathematics, literacy, computing, personal, social and health education (PSHE), SEN and/or disabilities, modern foreign languages and attendance. In addition, I met with three governors, including the vice chair, and I spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority's school improvement service.

I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including the school's self-evaluation document, plans and records for the use of additional funding, and the school's assessment information. I checked the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with pupils, and information relating to attendance. I undertook joint observations of learning across the school, looked at work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning during lessons.

I analysed the 56 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 29 free-text questionnaire responses from parents. I analysed the responses from 44 staff and 32 pupils, giving their views of the school.