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Mrs Sharon Anderson
Headteacher
Littlehaven Infant School
Hawkesbourne Road
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Dear Mrs Anderson

Short inspection of Littlehaven Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have committed yourself to improving the quality of education in the school. Alongside the federation assistant headteacher and your governors, you are determined that all pupils will do well and make good progress. The community values your leadership and recognises that you have made positive changes since your appointment. You know your school well. You have rightly focused on developing phonics throughout the school and strengthening early years provision in all areas. This has resulted in rapid improvement in pupil achievement. As a result of your leadership, the number of pupils achieving a good level of development in early years has risen for the third year in a row. In Year 2, pupils are now achieving at least the expected standards in reading and mathematics and improved standards in writing. You recognise that not enough pupils are achieving greater depth in their learning and more of the most able pupils need further challenge in the work they do in class.

You have trained and begun to develop your subject leaders. They teach with enthusiasm and pupils enjoy their lessons. The subject knowledge that individual teachers have is good, but they are not always able to share that knowledge sufficiently with other teachers. They have started to monitor their subjects, but recognise that they need to step up, be more accountable and develop their influence on the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

The school is a happy place. Pupils said that it is fun to go to school. They know they are expected to work hard and enjoy their learning, although some pupils in

Year 2 feel that they could be challenged to work harder. They appreciate their teachers and all they do for them. They enjoy conversing with adults and are open and friendly. Pupils behave well in class; they pay attention and concentrate well. They are polite and sociable at playtimes. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils know the importance of good manners and recognise that they contribute to school harmony and their ability to make friends easily. They know and use the school values of respect, perseverance, independence, being reflective and working together, and are proud of the certificates they receive for using them. They appreciate and enjoy their clubs, and take their responsibilities seriously.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and your leadership. They know they are always welcome. They value the time you and your staff give them and know that you listen to and act on their concerns. One parent said, 'This is a gem of a school.' They appreciate that their children are safe, happy and well behaved in school. In particular, parents value the support the staff give their children when they start in Reception. Play and stay sessions support parents in helping their children learn and make parents feel part of the whole school community.

The previous inspection report asked teachers to show pupils more examples of what they should be learning before they began their work and to give pupils more opportunities to practise their letters and sounds when reading and writing. They were also asked to share the excellent practice seen in the school at that time. You have introduced the display of examples of good work to support learning. These are being successfully used in mathematics and are increasingly being used for writing. The implementation of the new systematic phonics scheme throughout the school has ensured that pupils have grown in confidence in using their letters and sounds. Pupils are reading well and writing at length. As the school is part of a federation of two schools, you have made good use of the opportunities to share expertise in teaching and learning across the federation. Teachers are benefiting from working in partnership with teachers from the other school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that systems for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Your documentation is well kept and secure. Alongside you, governors monitor safeguarding closely and are confident that staff training is up to date and records are detailed and of a high quality. Adults know how to report concerns, and your systems are clear and conscientiously applied. You have made referrals to other agencies such as social services when needed. You keep a close eye on the work of other agencies and chase them up when you need to. Parents feel that you want to help the whole family and are grateful for your understanding when things are difficult for them at home.

You ensure that the school is a safe place and all the necessary checks and risk assessments are in place. You teach your pupils about online safety through the curriculum, and regularly inform parents about it through letters and advice on your website. Pupils were able to tell me how to keep themselves safe online.

Pupils said that there is very little bullying and poor behaviour. Parents' views confirmed this. Pupils are confident that they can sort some situations out for themselves. They know they can go to any member of staff if the situation is more serious and they can get help. They have faith that you would swiftly deal with anything major.

Attendance fell sharply last year. You have put a comprehensive system of reminders, rewards and sanctions in place. This has resulted in an improvement this year, and attendance is now in line with national average. There has been a significant reduction in the number of pupils who are persistently absent. However, persistent absence is still higher than you would like, and you know you will need to continue to work closely with some parents to improve the attendance of their children.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on safeguarding arrangements for the school; how well the areas for improvement from the last inspection have been tackled; the effectiveness of support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; the effectiveness of leaders in raising standards in writing and mathematics; and how well the curriculum contributes to the pupils' learning experience.
- The inclusion manager is a strength in the school. She is dynamic and well informed. She has revised the systems used to monitor pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This has brought about a consistent approach to providing interventions and targeted teaching for individuals. The additional support provided for basic skills has resulted in improved progress, particularly in phonics and mathematics. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well integrated into their classes and have challenges and work standards in their books that are very similar to those of other pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve at least in line with all other pupils in the school. You have spent the pupil premium grant well and the interventions provided to support disadvantaged pupils are effective.
- There has been a significant improvement in the standard of writing in the past year, and pupil outcomes are now closer to national averages. Girls are achieving well and boys are making much better progress in writing than they were last year throughout the school. The work you have done to develop phonics, good-quality reading texts, spelling, handwriting and making writing more appealing to boys has been very effective. This has led to pupils having greater confidence when writing, and most are willing to write at length. Boys are enjoying writing due to the exciting topics you have chosen for them. A group of boys were very animated when telling me about the Lego explorers topic, being proud to show me the stories they had written. They talked about where they had used good grammar and spelling, and they knew what they had to do to improve their writing further.
- A new approach to the teaching of spelling has been successful. Pupils spell well.

Writers in Reception use phonically plausible spelling in their free writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are keen to become good spellers and are proud to be able to spell words on their spelling lists. Several Year 1 pupils were able to spell words on the Year 2 list.

- Your introduction of a scheme to improve fluency in mathematics has been effective. Pupils are making progress in mathematics and now have similar performance to the national average for expected standards. You have rightly identified that more pupils need to achieve greater depth in mathematics. Pupils in early years and Year 1 are making good progress, and the challenge for the most able in Year 1 is mostly appropriate. However, expectations for what some of the most able pupils can achieve are not high enough. In particular, tasks set do not stretch the able pupils in Year 2 sufficiently. Some of the problem-solving activities seen during the inspection needed very simple mathematical processes to solve them, even though they looked complex.
- Your curriculum is creative and pupils really enjoy the topics. Recently, you have made your topics more attractive to pupils by asking them what they are interested in and incorporating this into the topic, for example, dinosaurs. Topics relate to a wide range of subjects. History, geography, design technology and science are all covered. The careful choice of topics has made a strong contribution to the improvement in boys' writing. Pupils record their work in well-presented topic books. Visitors enhance the experience and pupils particularly enjoyed the firefighters coming to the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop middle leaders so that they have more impact on the standards and progress in their subject areas
- teachers have higher expectations of more of the most able pupils, particularly those in Year 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Corbett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your federation assistant headteacher, subject leaders, the inclusion manager, office staff, three governors, some parents, a representative of the local authority and a group of pupils. I also considered 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I analysed a range of documents including leaders' self-evaluation, the school development plan, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I also visited every class in the school.