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Ms Clare Bladen
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Bladen

Short inspection of West Oxford Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 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 November 2013.

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 a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and where further improvement is needed. You, and other leaders, are supported very well by an astute governing body. Governors have a strong understanding of the work of the school and how well pupils are learning. They provide robust challenge and hold leaders to account stringently. In recent years, new appointments have strengthened the leadership team and increased the school's capacity for improvement.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and they particularly appreciate the wide range of extra activities the school has to offer, including sports and music clubs. Pupils behave well and are courteous and respectful of each other and their teachers. Parents and carers support the school and their children very well. The regular parent forum meetings are well attended and many parents help to raise funds for additional equipment at the school. The vast majority of parents speak very highly of the quality of education and care their children receive. As one parent commented, 'My children are excited about what they learn, have strong friendships, are happy to go to school and know that teachers and other staff care about them.' However, many parents expressed a lack of confidence in the leadership of the school and feel that communication could be improved.

Children in the early years make a good start to school and, by the end of Reception, a higher-than-average proportion achieve the expected 'good level of development'. In key stage 1, attainment is high. In 2017, attainment at the end of

Year 2 was above the national average and particularly high in reading. In key stage 2, there has been more variability in pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics. In 2017, a very high proportion of the most able pupils attained the higher standards in these subjects. However, in 2016 and 2017, pupils' attainment in writing was well below the standards expected at the end of key stage 2 and progress was far too slow. There are signs of improvement, and leaders are now taking positive action to address this issue. Nevertheless, there is some variability across the key stage. In some classes in key stage 2, teachers' expectations of pupils' written work are not high enough and insufficient attention is given to pupils' grammar and punctuation.

You have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Pupils in key stage 1 now achieve well. Members of the leadership team are knowledgeable and make a good contribution to school improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that all the necessary pre-employment checks are completed for staff. Staff receive regular, timely training to make sure that they are well informed about all aspects of safeguarding. Record-keeping is systematic and enables leaders to keep careful oversight of any concerns about pupils. Where appropriate, leaders refer concerns to outside agencies and work with other professionals to help keep pupils safe. Leaders carry out routine risk assessments, including of the school site. They are fully aware of the risks posed by the poor surface of the playground and are taking appropriate action to minimise the risk to pupils. For example, they make sure that there are always plenty of adults on the playground and they give reminders to pupils about not running in certain areas. Areas for physical activity, such as ball games, are also suitably 'zoned'. Governors are wisely seeking a longer-term, permanent solution to this issue.

Pupils feel safe at school. They enjoyed the recent Safer Internet Day and appreciate the assemblies that they have about keeping safe online. They know about the potential risks when using the internet and say that their teachers give them regular reminders about being extremely cautious before 'posting' anything. Pupils say that their teachers are kind and help to resolve any worries or difficulties. While bullying does occasionally happen, pupils are entirely confident that their teachers deal promptly with this. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well through their regular checks on safeguarding policies and practice in the school. The vast majority of parents agree that their children feel safe at school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection we agreed to focus on safeguarding and pupils' attendance, pupils' writing in key stage 2, how well leaders are improving writing standards in key stage 2, and how well pupils in key stages 1 and 2 are learning in the wider curriculum and applying their writing skills.
- Overall attendance is broadly average, as is persistent absence. In the last school year, a higher-than-average proportion of pupils who have special educational

needs (SEN) and/or disabilities were regularly absent from school. However, it is not possible to draw meaningful comparisons between different years due to the relatively small size of each cohort. Leaders are taking positive action to improve the attendance of the few pupils who continue to have high levels of absence.

- Across key stage 2, pupils' progress in writing is improving. When we reviewed pupils' books, we saw some examples of high-quality writing in a wide range of different writing tasks. Pupils are developing greater stamina through more opportunities to write at length. Some pupils are now writing with greater maturity, using more complex sentences and making adventurous word choices. For example, one pupil in lower key stage 2 wrote about their visit to the living rainforest: 'Next she showed us the neon-green snake which had curled around the root of the tree.' Another pupil wrote, 'Perched above the grey, slate roof, there was a colony of colourful birds.'
- Some pupils can explain confidently the different ways they make their writing interesting, for example by including adverbs, 'powerful' verbs and a 'hook' to capture the readers' attention. An older pupil successfully opened their persuasive letter with the phrase: 'If you are looking for a quick, informal meal then we suggest you try ...'
- However, improvements are not yet embedded in all classes in key stage 2. In some classes, weaknesses in pupils' writing persist, particularly in grammar and punctuation. Errors are not systematically addressed by all teachers. As a result, the quality of some pupils' writing is impaired. The school's assessment information shows that although overall progress has improved, some pupils still have 'lost ground' to make up. The school's own attainment milestones and targets for pupils' writing in key stage 2 have not been met.
- Leaders are taking effective action to continue to improve the quality of pupils' writing in key stage 2. The appointment of the deputy headteacher has increased leaders' capacity to support teachers and develop their teaching skills, particularly with writing. The deputy headteacher is providing effective leadership in this aspect of the school's work. She has introduced a raft of new writing strategies to bring about greater consistency in teachers' approach to writing.
- Expectations are rising, and this is evident in pupils' improved handwriting and in the examples of high-quality writing in key stage 2. The detailed action plan sets out appropriate steps to improve writing and enables governors to monitor and check the progress of agreed actions. The knowledgeable deputy headteacher provides good support to teachers, through coaching and the modelling of good practice. Leaders keep careful track of the progress all groups of pupils are making. They acknowledge that although they are now taking appropriate action and there is an improving picture, standards of writing in some classes are not yet high enough.
- Leaders have created a curriculum that is broad and interesting. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make appropriate gains in their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. They benefit from opportunities to enrich their learning, for example by learning to play a musical instrument. Pupils' physical education and fitness is also supported well through the school's many extra sports clubs. Pupils achieve well in science and at the end of Year 2 and Year 6

they attain standards that are above those found nationally.

- The school's many visits to museums and places of interest strengthen pupils' learning in subjects such as history. These visits also provide inspiration for pupils' writing. Nevertheless, we agreed that in some classes in key stage 2, teachers' expectations of pupils' written work are not high enough. As a result, pupils' written work in many subjects is not consistently of good quality. You are also aware that the curriculum information on the school's website is not fully compliant and have plans to address this shortcoming.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 2 make consistently good progress so that more of them attain the expected standards and greater depth of learning
- teachers in key stage 2 have consistently high expectations of pupils' written work in all subjects and give greater attention to pupils' punctuation and grammar
- they strengthen communication with parents to build positive relationships and gain their confidence.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together, we visited all classrooms to observe pupils' learning in class. We met with the deputy headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation, review pupils' work in books and discuss their progress. I met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and held a telephone conversation with the local authority school improvement partner. I observed pupils at play during morning breaktime and met with a group of pupils from Years 2 to 6. I also took into account the views of pupils through the 50 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. I reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, safeguarding information and other school policies and documents. I considered the views of parents through the 60 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) and parents' free-text comments, and talked with parents at the start of the school day. I also took account of the six responses to the Ofsted staff survey.