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Mrs Wendy Smith  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Smith

### **Short inspection of Owslebury Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 2017, 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 Owslebury Primary School was judged to be good in March 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since starting at the school in September 2015, you have established a clear vision to ensure that the school continues to develop. You accurately identify what is working well and what could be better. Your 'no-excuses' culture has encouraged staff to match your high expectations. Together, you have focused on making improvements where they are most needed. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and share your ambitious aims. In the short amount of time that you have led the school, you have built a strong team to drive forward your key priorities.

You have developed clear lines of communication and built strong relationships with parents, who recognise the significant, positive contribution you make to the school. As a result, parents feel confident about Owslebury. One parent described the school as, 'a jewel in Hampshire's education crown, which offers something very special to its children'.

You and your staff team promote a caring and homely atmosphere where pupils say they feel safe and happy. Pupils work well with classmates and adults alike, applying themselves to their learning well. Staff are committed to providing appropriate challenge and support for each pupil. Senior leaders closely monitor the progress of each pupil and take swift action to provide them with extra help when needed. As a result, pupils make good progress across the curriculum, including

those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

You know how to further improve the school. You accurately identified that many children in the early years foundation stage and key stage 1 exceed the standards expected for their age. Your current plans rightly focus on accelerating pupils' progress in key stage 2 so that a higher proportion of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, reach the highest standards at the end of Year 6.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was asked to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics so that it matched pupils' progress in reading and writing. You now ensure that teachers provide pupils with opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and understanding to problem-solving. As a result, pupils make better progress in mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and the deputy headteacher ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet current requirements. Regular training and checks on safeguarding keep staff well informed. They are vigilant in their duties to safeguard the children in their care. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and provide clear guidance for staff.

Procedures for recruitment are thorough. You and the governors have had appropriate training to help you ensure that safeguarding is a priority when recruiting staff. Records show that all necessary checks are completed diligently.

Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils were able to explain how the school teaches them to keep safe through lessons about road safety, 'stranger danger', computer safety and cyber bullying. They are confident that they can speak to an adult in the school if they feel worried or unsafe. Pupils enjoy coming to school. However, some groups of pupils have high rates of absence. Much is already in place to improve attendance and you are right to continue to focus on this as an area of priority for the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I evaluated: how well teaching promotes the progress of disadvantaged pupils; the achievement of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils; what actions leaders are taking to reduce absence; and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
- Leaders rightly recognise that a higher proportion of pupils should be exceeding the expectations for their age by the end of key stage 2. Leaders for English and mathematics have devised useful action plans, which sensibly focus on making sure that the most able pupils' needs are met well. Leaders are confident about trialling new procedures and sharing successful practice with colleagues. They skilfully work through a clear cycle of monitoring and evaluation, providing training and coaching for teachers to ensure that all children learn well. Some

teachers have begun to provide challenging activities to deepen pupils' thinking and extend their understanding. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.

- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading and writing. The recent introduction of 'learning journeys' has supported teachers in planning work that fully meets the needs of all pupils, and has particularly benefited disadvantaged pupils. Teachers use high-quality texts, which are steeped in rich language, to help pupils deepen their reading skills and broaden their vocabulary. Pupils also use these texts to identify ways that they can improve their own writing. Teachers support pupils so that they edit and refine their work. This results in high-quality writing. As a result, current pupils are making good progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their starting points in mathematics. You and the mathematics leader have ensured that teachers plan relevant activities that enable pupils to practise reasoning and apply their number skills to problem solving. In 2016, pupils' attainment in mathematics was above the national average in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- New strategies to improve attendance and reduce some pupils' high rates of absence are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, the 'Early bird club', which is a breakfast club, has helped some pupils to attend more often and arrive at school on time. Leaders track pupils' absence and lateness. This information shows that the proportion of pupils coming to school late has decreased this term. Attendance also increased in the spring term. You and your governors rightly recognise the need to continue this work.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- work to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence continues for all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- pupils in key stage 2 are challenged so that a higher proportion of them exceed the expectations for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Luisa Gould  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion manager, the English leader, a representative from the local authority and a group of governors. I talked to a group of children to consider their views of the school. Jointly, you and I visited all classes and evaluated work in pupils' books. We also discussed progress information for current pupils and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I considered 13 responses to the staff questionnaire and 42 responses to the online survey, Parent View. I also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day and took account of a number of letters that parents had written to me. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including policies and procedures, reports from the local authority, and minutes from governing body meetings. I met with you and your senior administration assistant to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding and scrutinised your procedures for vetting and recruitment.