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Mrs Liz Cole
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Dear Mrs Cole

Short inspection of Owlsmoor Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 October 2017 with Karen Metcalfe, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You lead Owlsmoor with determination to see pupils achieve their best. The school's main aim, that all children should develop a lifelong love of learning, is at the forefront of your work and provides a clear focus for all staff to drive continual school improvement. Your senior and middle leaders are very capable and assist you well in leading the school. Your committed team of governors is similarly effective, challenging and supporting you in equal measure to improve outcomes for pupils. Together, you evaluate well the school's effectiveness. You know its particular strengths and what could be even better. Your sustained efforts have ensured that the school has improved further since your last inspection.

Your pupils are wonderful ambassadors for Owlsmoor. They relish the additional responsibilities they take on, such as school councillors, 'playground buddies' and school librarians. They also take pride in representing Owlsmoor at sports, and commented to the inspectors how they enjoy competing in local tournaments and competitions. Pupils were unanimous in saying that you have created a friendly and nurturing school. They demonstrate clear compassion for each other, and a high regard for British values. As one pupil commented: 'We love learning from our friends about each other's different religions and faiths. It's really fascinating.' Owlsmoor is a school where tolerance and respect are embedded throughout.

Your hard work has ensured that parents value Owlsmoor highly. They appreciate the welcoming environment and the school's 'open door' policy. Many commented that teachers are always approachable and have the pupils' best interests at heart. Others stated that those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. One comment, typical of many, stated: 'My child has thrived, and is developing into a beautiful, smart, polite person. This is because of the help and support he receives in school.'

Leaders have addressed successfully the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Your concerted efforts ensure that teaching is of a good standard. You have put in place effective performance management and you support staff well. For example, newly qualified teachers are mentored successfully and learn appropriately from more experienced teachers. You have refined the school's policy for providing pupils with good-quality feedback so that they know what they need to do to improve their work.

Current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are making consistently good progress in a range of subjects. Last year, pupils achieved well in key stage 2 national assessments, and outcomes in mathematics were particularly strong. Children typically make rapid progress in the early years, in phonics in Year 1 and in national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. However, the school is rightly working to ensure that pupils' writing skills improve further. You are also aware that pupils are not yet achieving at the highest standards across the wider curriculum. This is because some of the work set is not sufficiently demanding to ensure that pupils are required to think deeply enough in a range of subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a strong safeguarding culture that permeates throughout the school. For instance, when recruiting new members of staff, you ensure that all appropriate employment checks are made, including the taking up of rigorous references. Information is recorded accurately on the school's single central record. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory government guidance.

You work diligently with other child protection professionals from the local authority to keep children safe. You show clear commitment to ensuring that every vulnerable child receives the support they need. You do not shy away from challenging others to ensure the highest standards of care for children at risk of harm.

You provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, in learning about pedestrian safety, younger pupils explained how important it is to hold an adult's hand and look both ways when crossing the road. Older pupils explained their ongoing learning in using the internet safely. They knew not to share personal information on social media websites, to keep passwords safe and to be vigilant to the dangers presented by strangers online.

Pupils say that bullying does not happen at Owlsmoor. They know what bullying is, and say that if it were to occur, they are confident that staff would deal with it swiftly and effectively. Pupils play together cooperatively, and they are supportive and caring of each other. Parents unanimously agree that the school keeps their children safe.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we focused on how effectively leaders ensure that pupils achieve well in writing. We also scrutinised leaders' work in promoting boys' reading. Additionally, we examined the school's work in ensuring disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. Finally, we evaluated leaders' work to ensure that pupils are challenged effectively, and achieve well, across the wider curriculum.
- You ensure that pupils develop good writing skills from the moment they start at Owlsmoor. Children get off to a flying start in your excellent early years setting and quickly develop their emerging writing skills and phonics understanding. Staff support them to a very high standard and ensure that they are well placed to succeed further when they join Year 1.
- Your teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help pupils improve their written work. For example, in Year 6, pupils were using successfully more complex grammar and punctuation. The class teachers' skilful explanations strengthened pupils' understanding and helped them improve their writing. However, opportunities for pupils to deepen their writing skills across the wider curriculum are currently limited. More pupils need to be able to write at the highest standards in a range of subjects.
- Boys talk with enthusiasm about reading. You provide a suitable variety of texts and books that enrich their learning and spark their interests. For instance, boys were keen to share their historical knowledge learned while reading a classic story set during Victorian England.
- Boys make good progress in reading. Wisely, you have refined carefully how reading is taught, and improved teaching across the school. Boys told inspectors that lessons and activities help them 'understand texts better, and use more complex words'.
- You track carefully the progress disadvantaged pupils make in a range of subjects. You identify pupils' additional needs, and use a range of successful strategies to ensure that they achieve well. For instance, teaching assistants are adept at providing extra support in lessons and skilfully help this group of pupils make rapid progress.
- You have high expectations for disadvantaged pupils. You work closely with families, and provide additional support and care whenever necessary. As a result of your determined efforts, disadvantaged pupils' attendance has risen and their outcomes have improved significantly.
- The wider curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to learn across a range of subjects. For instance, pupils enjoy the creative arts, and many exciting displays and sculptures produced by pupils adorn the school. Inspectors were

particularly impressed with pupils' singing abilities and the musical talent younger children displayed while bell-ringing during assembly.

- Teachers use imaginative activities to bring learning to life. In one history lesson, pupils were pretending to be Victorian inventors, and asked each other questions to deepen their knowledge of history. Their insightful answers helped their peers glean additional information they had discovered from a range of different sources.
- However, some learning across the wider curriculum is not sufficiently demanding. In some lessons, activities do not challenge pupils, particularly those who are most-able, to think deeply and extend their knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to ensure that the wider curriculum is improved further to stimulate pupils to learn at the highest standards.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in writing continue to improve in a range of subjects
- the wider curriculum engages pupils and inspires pupils to learn.

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

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors observed learning across the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject coordinators and the inclusion manager. I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors. I also met with the school's standards and effectiveness partner from the local authority. I took into account 109 responses, including written responses, to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. A range of documents were reviewed, including: the school's development plan; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; the school's single central record of recruitment checks made on staff; information about pupils' achievement; records of pupils' behaviour and attendance; and minutes of governing body meetings.