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Mr Stuart Ludford
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Ludford

Short inspection of Hazeldown School

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 2019, 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 June 2015.

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 a dedicated staff team that is determined to provide a broad and exciting curriculum for pupils. You are ably assisted by your deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, who share a clear, collective vision for the school.

Parents and carers told me that they appreciate the wide range of opportunities that you provide for their children. One described how the school encouraged pupils' 'curiosity and love for learning and understanding our world'. Pupils told me how they enjoy being given responsibilities by their teachers. They feel safe and strongly agree that the school encourages them to respect others and treat everyone equally.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to make sure that teachers challenge pupils more effectively to quicken their progress. This formed a line of enquiry for this inspection and is discussed later in this report. You were also asked to ensure that pupils respond more fully to feedback from their teachers and further share the existing outstanding practice across the school.

During our visits to classes, we scrutinised pupils' workbooks to assess the progress pupils make over time and to gather their views on how well they are improving. Teachers in all classes are effectively following the agreed marking policy, which includes the use of verbal and written feedback. Pupils were able to show me examples of their self-assessment of their learning and how they enjoyed reviewing

and improving their work. Teachers told me about the strategies used to share good practice across the school and how these had led to improved provision for the pupils.

Governors know the school well and provide a good balance of support and challenge. A good example of this is governors' regular scrutiny of parents' comments on the Parent View online survey facility. Recently, governors noticed that some parents had raised concerns about homework provided across the school. They challenged school leaders about this issue and a full review, including consultation with parents, led to significant improvements in the use of homework. During the inspection, I saw many examples of high-quality homework that had deepened pupils' learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders promote a strong culture for safeguarding pupils. Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have effective systems, training and checks in place to make sure that all staff have the detailed knowledge to ensure that pupils are safe. You and your governors have effective processes to check the suitability and appointment of staff and you keep this information updated regularly.

You closely monitor pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Your records show that you are persistent when working with outside agencies. You make sure that pupils receive the support that they need.

Many parents responded to the Parent View questionnaire. The overwhelming majority believe that their children are happy and safe at school. Parents also agree that pupils are well behaved and that school leaders respond effectively to any concerns. A small minority of parents, however, expressed concerns about bullying and the way in which it is dealt with. Pupils told me that bullying rarely happens, but that when it does, it is dealt with well. Pupils described the many opportunities they have to share any worries and concerns with adults and with each other. Year 6 pupils shared their views that all pupils have the right to feel 'safe, comfortable and not disturbed when they are learning'. One added, 'These are the main pillars that keep our school going!' During the inspection, I scrutinised behaviour documentation and assessed behaviour in all classes and at breaktimes. You ensure that the agreed behaviour policies are being followed by all staff, and records show that leaders act quickly and effectively to address concerns from parents.

A few parents also raised concerns about specific support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These concerns led to this aspect of provision forming an additional line of enquiry during the inspection.

Pupils can recognise risks and know how to keep safe because they receive effective guidance in lessons and assemblies. They know the importance of carrying out various drills during the school year. For example, they described the importance of remaining calm if the school had to go into a 'lockdown' mode. Pupils

are alert to the dangers of having access to inappropriate material on the internet because of the clear guidance from their teachers.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the particular aspects of the school's work on which the inspection would focus.
- The first line of enquiry considered how effectively teachers are providing appropriate challenge for pupils, so that they make the progress of which they are capable. This was an area for improvement following the previous inspection.
- Leaders have effectively addressed this area for improvement. I saw clear evidence of teachers providing appropriate challenge for pupils during the inspection. In lessons and in workbooks, teachers expect pupils to challenge themselves using a range of given tasks. Pupils happily rise to this expectation and many showed me examples in their workbooks where their challenges had led to significant improvements in their learning. Pupils support each other well and they can gather further advice from identified writing and numeracy 'experts' in their working groups.
- The next line of enquiry assessed how leaders ensure that boys in key stage 2 are supported to make at least good progress in writing. In 2018, boys made weaker progress than girls in writing at key stage 2. Overall attainment in writing was significantly above average at the expected standard and above average at greater depth. While a third of girls achieved the higher writing standard, only one boy reached the same standard.
- Currently, writing standards are rising across key stage 2 for boys and girls. Teachers are encouraging pupils to write at the higher standard in English and when writing in subjects across the curriculum. During the inspection, I examined the quality of writing in English books and in pupils' 'self-organised learning' topic books. Pupils were proud to share their extremely well-presented work in their topic books and to tell me about their learning in different subjects. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for writing in different styles and for different purposes across the curriculum. I saw many examples of writing at the higher standard by boys in classes across key stage 2. I was particularly impressed by the quality of descriptive writing in pupils' responses to feedback from teachers. Leaders have prioritised the need to ensure that a higher proportion of boys achieve greater depth in writing across key stage 2. This needs to remain a focus until boys consistently achieve writing outcomes in line with, or above, those seen nationally.
- The third line of enquiry considered how well leaders check that additional funding is used effectively to support the most able disadvantaged pupils at key stage 2. During the last three years, disadvantaged pupils have made good overall progress. Over this time, disadvantaged pupils have made similar, and in some cases, stronger progress than other pupils from similar starting points. However, over time, fewer disadvantaged pupils have achieved the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics than is seen nationally. For example, in 2018, no disadvantaged pupils achieved the combined higher standard for reading, writing and mathematics. This was below the 12% national

average.

- Leaders, including governors, continually assess the impact of the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They are able to accurately assess the impact of specific spending. For example, you use a proportion of the additional funding to provide additional teaching support for pupils in Years 5 and 6. This support has led to significant progress being made by the most able disadvantaged pupils in mathematics and writing, as shown by improving outcomes in pupils' workbooks. It was exemplified in a Year 6 class, during the inspection, when pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, were using their understanding of geometry to find missing angles in complex shapes. Leaders have identified the need to continue to provide effective support, so that the most able disadvantaged pupils consistently achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The fourth line of enquiry assessed how effectively leaders have acted to address the high rates of persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils and of pupils with SEND. Leaders have taken steps to identify the barriers that hinder regular attendance for specific pupils. They work closely with families, and their effective actions have led to significant improvements for individual pupils, as shown in case studies. Persistent absence rates are falling and current attendance is in line with national averages for specific groups of pupils.
- As noted in the first section of this report, a small minority of parents raised concerns about the support provided for pupils with SEND. Of the 155 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, 91% of parents noted that their children were looked after well, with a similar proportion saying that the school responded effectively to concerns. These views were strongly supported in the free-text responses submitted by parents. One comment, typical of many, stated, 'The SEND team deserve a special mention and have organised some great workshops.' This parent added, 'They are always supportive and available when you have concerns.' Scrutiny of school policies, practices and case studies shows that the school provides good support for pupils with SEND, enabling them to make good progress over time. Leaders agree that they need to share more detailed information about how the school provides for pupils with SEND and to ensure that all parents are enabled to discuss any concerns.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of boys achieving the higher standard in writing at key stage 2 improves to be in line with, or above, the national average
- a higher proportion of the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Hodson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, various school leaders and members of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with the local authority adviser for schools. We visited classrooms together so that I could assess the progress being made by pupils. I looked at pupils' workbooks and talked with pupils in classes and at a separate meeting. I considered the progress being made by current pupils.

I looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and plans for improvement. I looked at various documents related to safeguarding, including the single central record and referrals to the local authority. I also assessed current rates of attendance for groups of pupils. I gathered views from parents at the school gate and took account of 155 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed 119 free-text responses from parents and findings from the questionnaires for staff and pupils.