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Mr Lee Pinchback
Headteacher
Fairways Primary School
The Fairway
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Dear Mr Pinchback

Short inspection of Fairways Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 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 October 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 have successfully addressed the areas for improvement raised in the previous inspection report. In particular, you have secured a solid base of good teaching which is underpinned by high-quality questioning and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are interested in the work they are doing and are keen to do it well. Teaching assistants support the work of teachers effectively, ensuring that pupils receive the right help in lessons.

Since the previous inspection, you have enhanced the systems you use to track pupils' progress. You combine teachers' assessments with tests to ensure that the information you have is both accurate and useful. You have supported teachers in the use of this information to ensure that they identify and fill gaps in pupils' knowledge. You have a clear understanding of the progress that pupils are making and work with teachers to secure the right support for them. As a consequence, the work that pupils do is usually challenging and builds well on what they already know and can do. This enables pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They value the information they receive from you and other leaders, and take time to check this for themselves. They understand the impact of your work and are not afraid to challenge you if they feel that more should be done. Governors are effective in supporting you as you lead the school forward.

Pupils I spoke with during the inspection are highly positive about their experiences.

They are pleased to attend the school and find the school community to be welcoming and friendly. They value the help that teachers give them and enjoy learning. Pupils who completed Ofsted's survey of their views confirmed that the majority enjoy coming to school and feel well supported by their teachers. This was also reflected in the responses of parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Safeguarding is effective.

You make sure that staff have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe. You are vigilant and instil in staff the need to be watchful for signs that pupils might be at risk of harm. You have established clear procedures for reporting concerns and maintain effective records. These allow you to monitor pupils' well-being effectively and to keep them safe.

You teach pupils how to keep themselves safe. They are aware, for example, of 'stranger danger', different types of bullying and of how to stay safe online. Bullying is rare and, when it does happen, adults in school deal with it well. Pupils I spoke with consistently said that they had someone they would talk to in school if they were worried. They also spoke of the friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and of how it is okay to be different. Pupils feel safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to establish whether pupils currently in the school are making good progress at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2016, pupils in key stage 2 made progress which was broadly in line with the national average in reading and writing, but lower in mathematics. In 2017, pupils made better progress in mathematics, but progress in writing fell to below average.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 were adversely affected by a small number of pupils. Most pupils currently in the school make good progress over time through key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. They are well supported by effective teaching and work which builds on their current understanding. Pupils are also making good progress in writing across the school, though you recognise that this is less consistently strong in Years 5 and 6.
- My second line of enquiry related to how well leaders overcome the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils.
- Over time, the progress of disadvantaged pupils at key stage 2 has been variable. In 2017, they did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally during key stage 2 in writing and mathematics. In key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was lower than that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- You base the support you give to disadvantaged pupils on an analysis of their individual needs. For example, some receive counselling, while others get extra help in lessons. You track their progress carefully and discuss it with their teachers. You put in additional support where pupils are not achieving as well as

they should. As a consequence, the progress that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make is similar to that of other pupils nationally.

- My final line of enquiry was to establish if teaching meets the needs of pupils with different starting points. Pupils with lower-than-average starting points have typically made less progress than other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics since 2014. The previous inspection report recommended that teachers develop their understanding of what pupils already know and can do to help them develop pupils' learning more effectively.
- Teachers now generally use their understanding of pupils' prior achievements to guide what they teach and how they support pupils. Pupils often have work which is well matched to their prior learning. Adults provide appropriate support to pupils with different starting points. Most pupils' work, including that of pupils with low starting points, shows that they make good progress over time. Pupils I spoke with during the inspection agreed that lessons are interesting and that the work is usually hard enough. They appreciate the 'challenge tasks' and would value more of these.
- You recognise that some teaching could still be better so that all teaching closely matches the needs of the full range of pupils in the class, especially those who are the most able.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching continues to develop so that all teaching routinely meets the needs of pupils with different starting points, especially those who are the most able;
- the progress that pupils make continues to improve, especially in writing, so that that it is consistently strong across all year groups.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Southend-on-Sea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hemmings
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with school leaders and three governors. I visited 10 classes, accompanied by you, and reviewed pupils' work in their books.

I looked at performance information and reviewed a range of documentation relating to the school's self-evaluation, development planning, safeguarding arrangements and governance.

I considered the 89 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 26 responses to the staff survey and the 103 responses to the pupil survey. I met with pupils individually and in groups, as well as listening to pupils read.