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Dear Ms Green

Short inspection of Trafalgar Community Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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 June 2014.

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 skilfully and professionally addressed the challenges thrown up by results as shown in published information about the school. You recognised in 2017 that outcomes were not improving as fast as you wanted. You worked with governors to get a very full picture of the pupils who were doing well and those who were not. You extended this analysis to include the performance of groups of pupils. As a team, you rightly identified that boys were not always doing as well as girls and that disadvantaged pupils were falling behind their classmates. Helpfully, you also critically evaluated the apparent differences between performance in the early years and key stage 1.

For the start of the 2017/18 academic year, you allocated teachers to classes to make even better use of their skills and made some strong new appointments. This was a strategic attempt to ensure that teachers were matched well to their classes. This meant, particularly, that little time was lost at the beginning of Year 1 as the children already knew the teacher who moved up with them. One of the teachers had led their learning in the early years. This has had the extra benefit of ensuring that effective early years practice is spreading through the school. A simple illustration of this is the creation, this year, of a separate outdoor learning space for the Year 1 children.

Teaching is consistently good in all year groups. Teachers are supported by well-trained teaching assistants who make good use of time to extend and enrich pupils' experiences. In every class we visited, we saw teachers using the correct technical language for the subject they were teaching but also ensuring that pupils' vocabulary is growing daily. The well-organised teaching of phonics means that pupils learn to read quickly. Teachers follow this up with many opportunities for pupils to read. Most parents and carers welcome the chance to support the development of their child's reading with books sent home.

Work in pupils' books shows that you have successfully implemented a strategy for encouraging pupils to write well. This begins in the early years, where there are some impressive examples of children's writing which are coherent, complex and obedient to the rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Similarly, good whole-school planning for teaching mathematics means that pupils in Year 2 use number well, are able to set out work neatly and use the correct symbols for mathematical functions. In Year 1, good number work is complemented effectively with activities to help pupils learn to tell the time accurately. Even this process is started in the early years, where, for example, a group of boys had created a fabulous model of Big Ben and were able to imagine the clock that sits in the tower. In their excited 'talk' about their building, they accurately described the shapes of objects they were using for the construction.

This is clear evidence of the impact of your leadership work. Your evaluation of the school's performance showed that the school's outcomes in mathematics in 2016 and 2017 were not as good as they should have been. This led you to make a concerted and cooperative effort to improve outcomes in the current year. You have encouraged teachers to use mathematical tools wherever possible, and we saw many good examples of pupils doing so in lessons. Notably, children played with such tools in the early years. They will, therefore, be familiar with them when they are used to support more formal learning in Year 1. This is evidence of a well-intentioned and well-planned curriculum.

Other aspects of the school's work are equally threaded through each year group and class. The school's status as a United Nations 'rights respecting school' is evident in all aspects of its approaches to its work. Alongside teachers' consistent and effective classroom management, the commitment to children's rights means that behaviour is managed fairly, openly and effectively. Pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous to each other, as well as to adults and visitors.

The impact of the strengthened teaching, clear planning and strong and effective leadership is that any decline in the school's results has been halted. You have benefited from a knowledgeable, experienced and committed team of governors. They use information about pupils' performance to hold you and other leaders to account. Some of the information they hold is so detailed that, sometimes, the key messages are buried. Helpfully, you and the governors have had good support from the local authority adviser. With his help, the leadership team has set the priorities for the school's next steps, which must be on these aspects: further improvements to progress and outcomes in key stage 1; the relative performance of boys to girls;

and further diminishing the differences between the performance of the small number of disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Safeguarding is effective.

The checks that you make on people wishing to work at or volunteer at the school are carried out thoroughly. They are recorded in a single central record fully compliant with contemporary expectations. The bursar is assiduous in maintaining this record to a high standard. The arrangements for the security of the site are in place and are maintained to a good standard. You ensure that good-quality training is in place annually for all staff so that they know how to spot the signs of abuse, neglect or potential radicalisation. The evidence of this training is found in many of the ways teachers approach their management of the pupils. They care for them professionally and effectively in potentially risky situations such as moving to other sites for sports days or going to meet siblings at other schools at the end of each day. Governors check that expectations are met in this crucial aspect of the school's work.

During the inspection, a large number of pupils did not have their own hats or sun protection, despite the extreme weather conditions. You are working with parents to limit the risk of their children being exposed to the sun for too long while they are learning.

Inspection findings

- The inspection was undertaken to check the accuracy of the school's approach to assessment, the multiple barriers that some children have to learning, the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements and the overall quality of teaching.
- You gave me a helpful insight into the school's comprehensive approach to assessment. You showed me the clear systems you use for recording, monitoring and tracking pupils' progress. The systems interrelate efficiently and produce very detailed accounts of how well current pupils are doing. However, together, they generate vast quantities of information, too much for teachers to use easily in their planning.
- We discussed the extensive arrangements you have made with other schools to compare and check each other's work. This means your assessments are accurate and align closely to age-related expectations of pupils' attainment.
- You showed me compelling evidence that some of the pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities have several other barriers to their learning. You make good use of the additional resources available to support pupils' learning and development. You target these resources on a case-by-case basis after a thorough evaluation of what will be in each pupil's best interests. We agreed that it would be impossible to infer patterns or trends in the performance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, due to the size of and individual differences in cohorts.

- We agreed also that the cohort of disadvantaged pupils is, similarly, too small to infer patterns or trends. Some of these pupils also have SEN and/or disabilities. However, your staff take great care to ensure that these pupils are not further disadvantaged in school and are supported to do as well as they can on an individual basis.
- Teaching in the early years is highly effective. It is well planned, coherent and supported by a rich learning environment. It leads to the large majority of pupils attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Teaching is increasingly strong in key stage 1. You have taken advice, visited other settings and asked experts to review teaching so that you have a very full, balanced and moderated understanding of its quality. You are moving away from making judgements on the basis of lesson observation only. There is clear evidence that you are now taking into account the impact of teaching on pupils' outcomes, the work pupils produce in their books and the climate for learning in each classroom.
- Classrooms are arranged and enhanced well to support teaching. Teachers and their assistants make good use of display spaces to showcase examples of pupils' work. They also use them to give examples and illustrations for pupils, just in time for when they need them.
- Adults contribute to the rich learning environment by purposeful interactions with pupils and targeted questioning. They have access to a wide repertoire of techniques and strategies. Each class has its own character and routines. However, as a whole, they generate a positive culture for learning across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- information about pupils' progress and outcomes is in the most easily read format and is fully understood by all stakeholders
- teachers continue to develop their ability to use such information to support the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

You led me on three tours of the school. We jointly observed learning in all classes, in the forest-school setting and in the various outdoor areas. I also observed pupils singing in the assembly. Some of this learning was jointly observed with the deputy headteacher, who currently serves as the headteacher on Tuesdays. I spoke with several pupils in lessons and on the playground, and considered 23 responses to Ofsted's confidential pupil survey. I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion coordinator and the early years leader. I also spoke briefly to members of staff as we toured the school and I considered 28 responses to the staff survey and one written comment. I spoke with six parents at the school gate and considered 50 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential survey, and took into account 35 free-text comments. I also reviewed your own survey of parents' views. I met with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks that you had gathered for the inspection.