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Debra Hines
Joy Lane Primary School
Joy Lane
Whitstable
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Dear Ms Hines

Short inspection of Joy Lane Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 October 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 February 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 provide exceptional leadership for staff and pupils. You lead your school with commitment and good humour. You have established a team of effective leaders that shares your positive approach and your aspirations for all pupils. You and your senior leaders sustain a culture of high expectations for all pupils across the school. You expect every pupil to work hard and to do their very best.

The school's friendly, welcoming and hard-working environment makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievement and well-being. Pupils love school. Their enthusiasm for learning is clear in their positive attitudes to learning and in their excellent behaviour.

You and your team have fully addressed each of the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection. Skilful teaching ensures that pupils make rapid progress in English, mathematics and a wide range of other subjects. Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have increased every year since the previous inspection. In 2017, standards at the end of key stage 2 were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, with a further increase in 2018.

Effective support ensures that those pupils who attend the specialist resource provision make the same strong progress as other pupils in the school. They benefit from special needs expertise in the specialist resource provision, as well as learning well alongside their classmates in the mainstream classes. Your school recently

achieved recognition as an 'Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship School', a fitting testimony to your success in ensuring that all pupils achieve well and play an active part in school life.

Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Good-quality training ensures that teaching assistants are knowledgeable about supporting pupils' personal and academic progress. They work confidently and successfully alongside teachers.

Parents' views of the school have improved substantially since the previous inspection. Parents are highly complementary about the school's work and are confident that their children are learning well.

Leaders have established clear and reliable communication routes since the previous inspection. As a result, parents are better informed about school life, and clearer about their children's progress, than was the case at the time of the previous inspection.

You and your leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs. For example, you have rightly identified small variations in pupils' progress in writing as they move up through the school. You have already put appropriate plans in place to address this aspect of the school's work, focusing on making sure that pupils complete consistently high-quality written work across the curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team give pupils' safety and well-being an appropriately high priority. You respond swiftly and robustly to any concerns about pupils' safety, liaising effectively with the local authority and with other agencies, including children's services. You and your team make sure that the school is tidy, attractive and well organised. As a result, pupils are able to work and play safely.

Caring and respectful relationships throughout the school ensure that pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils feel comfortable talking to their teachers about any concerns. They say that any problems are sorted out quickly. Parents are equally positive about their children's safety.

You ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are clearly understood, fit for purpose and followed consistently. You provide good-quality training for staff and governors so that all are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on: pupils' attendance; the quality of teaching during early years; disadvantaged pupils' progress; and the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.

- Leaders have developed robust procedures for checking and supporting pupils' attendance. They keep a close eye on individual pupils' attendance as well as monitoring attendance across the school as a whole. Leaders work closely and constructively with parents and agencies to encourage regular attendance.
- Leaders' continuous focus on ensuring that all pupils attend well has ensured steady improvement in pupils' attendance since the previous inspection. As a result, attendance rates in 2017 were much closer to the national average than in previous years, with further improvement in attendance rates in 2018. Leaders, however, are not complacent. They rightly recognise the importance of sustaining and building on the successes of recent years so that pupils achieve as well as they should throughout the school. Leaders will not be satisfied until all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attend regularly.
- Strong leadership and teaching during early years ensure that children make rapid progress and flourish, both personally and academically. As a result, children are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning by the end of Reception Year.
- Early years leaders responded swiftly and effectively to a dip in outcomes at the end of Reception Year in 2017, when the proportion of children achieving a good level of development dipped to below the national average. As a result, outcomes recovered fully in 2018.
- Stimulating and engaging teaching during early years capitalises and builds on children's curiosity about the world. For example, during the inspection, children were engrossed in exploring a wide range of activities in the outdoor area. They shared ideas with each other about how to complete tricky tasks while mastering new skills. Children concentrated equally well in the classrooms. For example, they listened intently while their teachers read a story, and they contributed enthusiastically when their teachers asked questions about what might happen next in the story.
- Leaders make good use of pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils learn well. For example, teaching assistants provide knowledgeable and perceptive support for pupils during lessons, so that pupils develop personal and learning skills. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make considerable gains in their learning, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, as with other groups, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes in writing are not as strong as outcomes in reading and mathematics.
- The school's broad and rich curriculum gives pupils plenty of opportunities to develop personal interests and to excel in particular subjects. The school year is punctuated by numerous events, trips and visits which bring learning to life and make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Pupils learn well across a range of subjects, including history, geography, art and religious education. The school's well-established science curriculum ensures that pupils develop a good scientific knowledge and understanding. An increased focus on developing pupils' scientific skills during the past year has strengthened pupils' understanding of how to complete experiments, including predicting outcomes, developing hypotheses and using results to draw conclusions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make consistently strong progress in writing across all year groups.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited 19 lessons with your head of school and with other senior leaders during the inspection. I looked at pupils' books during my visits to the classrooms and spoke with them about their work. I also looked separately at a sample of pupils' workbooks.

I met with you and with other senior leaders. I also met with six governors, including the chair of governors, and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I talked with pupils in the playground and in the dining hall during the lunchtime break.

I took account of 114 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered 53 completed staff questionnaires and 124 pupil questionnaires. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan. I also looked at a range of safeguarding documents.