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Mrs Yvonne Davis
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Davis

Short inspection of Oak View Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have high aspirations for the school which are shared by your team of skilled leaders and your well-informed and enthusiastic governing body.

Oak View Primary and Nursery School is rightly proud of its inclusive approach. Pupils told me, 'Everyone is really welcoming', and 'No matter how different we are, we all fit together.' It was clear from my visit that you and your leaders have an in-depth knowledge of the pupils. Across the school, there is an expectation that all pupils will achieve their potential regardless of background, prior attainment or additional need. This underpins the school's drive for further improvement and is leading to raised outcomes for all pupils.

A particular challenge for you, your leaders and governors is the high number of pupils who start or leave the school other than at the usual times. These pupils, many who speak English as an additional language, benefit from the strong support and excellent nurture that the school provides. This ensures that pupils settle quickly and are ready to learn. You ensure that swift and regular assessments are made of each pupil's progress to establish whether or not additional support is required. Records show that these pupils make progress at a similar rate to their peers, with some making rapid progress as gaps in their learning diminish.

You make sure that the learning environment that staff create for pupils is well organised, attractive and engaging. In every classroom and across the school, displays celebrate pupils' achievements and remind them of all that they have learned. Your high expectations are consistently evident in all classes, through the agreed features that you require to see in every class. These include, for example, displays of pupils' learning in literacy and mathematics, class rules and routines.

Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful towards each other and adults. They are keen to share their achievements with visitors. Pupils have strong, positive attitudes to learning and they behave very well in lessons and around the school.

Your passion for continuous improvement inspires the enthusiastic staff team to strive for the best possible outcomes for pupils' personal and academic achievement. All 20 staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school is led and managed well. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel well supported because there are systems in place to share ideas and plan together.

Parents and carers recognise that you are an effective leader and they also appreciate the hard work of staff. This is evident in the positive comments made in Parent View. One parent summed up the views of others by commenting: 'Oak View is an excellent school and the staff are brilliant.' Another parent stated: 'My child wakes up every morning excited about going to school.'

You, your leaders and governors have acted successfully on the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Our joint visits to lessons, including a scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's current assessment information, demonstrate that pupils, including the most able pupils, make good progress in writing. Pupils write at length, in a range of styles, and sustain a good quality of writing. Books and classroom displays show interesting topics and prompts to encourage pupils to write for different purposes. Teachers skilfully ask questions to check pupils' understanding and give them clear feedback so that they know how to improve their work further. As one pupil said: 'Our teachers are helpful. The work is not too easy. We get to think.'

You and governors know the school very well and continually evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses to help you accurately plan for future improvement. The school's self-evaluation document is fully effective in ensuring that action plans focus on the most important areas that will further improve standards. You and the governors recognise that there are still areas to develop to move the school forward. You acknowledge that improving pupils' attendance is a priority.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school. You and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of

high quality. For example, recruitment checks on staff's suitability to work with children are well maintained and rigorous.

Staff and governors have benefited from appropriate training and know what to do should a concern about a pupil arise. Secure processes are in place for monitoring and recording any safeguarding concerns. Staff work sensitively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support any vulnerable pupils.

Parents and pupils say that the school is a safe place to be. Pupils say that there is no bullying and if anyone is 'mean' the adults will quickly 'sort it out'. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet because they are taught well about risks and know whom to turn to if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- In order to check whether the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. First, I considered how effectively phonics is taught, and whether pupils make good enough progress in this area from their starting points. Published assessment information shows that although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been increasing since the previous inspection, results remain below the national average.
- Effective steps have been taken by you and other leaders to strengthen phonics provision. Training for teachers and teaching assistants, led by the knowledgeable English leader, has successfully raised expectations and daily sessions are sharp and well-paced. Pupils' progress in phonics is closely tracked and targeted support quickly put in place to address any underachievement. This improves pupils' outcomes.
- The phonics lessons that we observed together were interactive and fun so pupils were interested and enjoying their learning. When I heard a group of pupils read their books, they demonstrated a good level of phonics knowledge. They were able to use and apply their skills to identify sounds when reading different words.
- You and other leaders are making sure that the improved teaching of phonics is closely monitored and evaluated over a longer period to ensure that it is having the desired impact. As a result, pupils' attainment in phonics has improved and the school's current assessment information indicates that a higher proportion of pupils are likely to achieve the expected standard.
- Another line of enquiry focused on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make in key stage 1. This is because, in 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of key stage 1, was below the national average. Your school assessment information shows that the high number of pupils who start and leave the school other than at the usual times affected the overall outcomes. However, you and your leaders are determined to increase the number of pupils who reach the expected standards.

- Focused training for staff who are new to teaching this key stage, or have recently joined the school, has ensured that they have a strong understanding of the curriculum and what to expect of pupils in this key stage. Consequently, teachers plan work that is well suited to pupils' different ages, needs and abilities. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide effective support for pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- The quality and quantity of work in pupils' books, displays around the school and the school's current assessment information indicate that the quality of teaching is typically effective over time. Pupils are happy, confident and achieving well across all subjects. Nevertheless, you know that you need to continue to embed the effective teaching approaches you introduced at the beginning of the school year to secure and maintain consistently high levels of pupils' achievement.
- Finally, I considered how well pupils are supported and encouraged to attend school. This line of enquiry arose from historical information showing that not all pupils attended school as often as they should. Since the previous inspection, the attendance of pupils has increased. However, figures remain below the national average. I looked at rates of attendance and, specifically, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Previously, these groups have had particularly high rates of absence, including persistent absence.
- Leaders and governors are well aware of the need to improve attendance. Overseen by your attendance leader, rigorous procedures are in place to establish the reasons for any pupil's absence. Staff are quick to address attendance issues: for example, phoning parents at the start of the day when pupils do not turn up for school.
- Leaders' focused actions are having a positive impact and the attendance figures for the school, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are rapidly improving. However, there are still a number of pupils who, for various and sometimes complex reasons, are regularly absent. Pupils' attendance remains a school improvement priority.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recently introduced strategies to improve teaching in reading, writing and mathematics are further embedded so that more pupils in key stage 1 reach the expected standards
- the current work to improve pupils' attendance is further developed so that the school's attendance figures are at least in line with national averages, and the number of pupils who fail to attend the school regularly continues to quickly reduce.

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

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- You and I discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's internal evaluation of its performance, plans for future improvement, and information about current pupils' progress and attainment.
- Meetings were held with you and two of your governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with the school's local authority improvement adviser to discuss their work with the school.
- I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included joint observations with you of teaching and learning in classes across the school.
- We looked at a sample of pupils' current work across all subjects and across a wide range of abilities.
- I spoke informally to a number of pupils in classrooms about their learning, and met more formally with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and case studies about referrals made to external agencies. A discussion was held with you and your deputy as the school's designated safeguarding leads.
- The views of 13 parents who responded to Parent View were taken into account, as well as the 10 responses parents made using the free-text service. I also considered the school's own recent parent survey, which included the views of 141 parents.
- The 20 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey were also considered to obtain staff views.