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Samuel Bartholomew  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Bartholomew

### **Short inspection of Dunmore Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 25 January 2017, 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 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Immediately on your appointment last September, you wasted no time in addressing the causes of the dip in results achieved in the 2016 national tests for key stages 1 and 2. You decisively restructured and re-invigorated senior and middle management and made rapid improvements to the curriculum so it met the needs of pupils. In addition, you have worked with the local authority and partner schools to source additional training for teachers. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment is now much more focused on meeting pupils' needs.

School leaders are very supportive and have great confidence in your leadership. This is because they are now fully involved at a strategic level in developing teaching and learning to improve pupils' achievement. Both staff morale and parental support are high. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work closely with you and other leaders to accurately identify and prioritise key actions. Governors use their knowledge and expertise well to support and challenge you and other leaders to continue to raise standards. They visit school regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's work and monitor safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils' conduct around the school and their behaviour in lessons is good at Dunmore. During my classroom visits, it was very apparent that pupils are engaged in their learning and that the work set is appropriately matched to their needs. Pupils are positive about the school, care for each other and particularly value the

clubs, trips and activities that the school offers. In my meetings with them, pupils were keen to express how much they value the good education they receive and feel that teachers involve them in their own learning.

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school. These included the additional support for those pupils who need it, safeguarding and the pupils' understanding of community. The inspectors identified a need to further raise attainment across the school and to improve the consistency of assessment practices. You are effectively addressing these two areas for improvement by:

- revising teachers' planning to ensure better coverage of the national curriculum in English and mathematics
- ensuring that lessons more closely match the needs of pupils
- using a range of approaches, including looking closely at pupils' work, using new tools to track and analyse pupils' progress and having rigorous discussions with staff, to ensure consistency in teachers' assessments.

You, your leadership team and governors are very determined and ambitious for the school to continue to provide high-quality education for all pupils. On appointment, you immediately rewrote the self-evaluation and school development plan. This enabled you to prioritise your actions and address the causes in the dip in national tests for key stages 1 and 2 last year swiftly.

Current pupils are now making good progress towards reaching end-of-year expectations. You know that standards in mathematics can still be improved and that a greater challenge needs to be given to lower-attaining pupils in key stage 1. Middle leaders have now begun to address these priorities. There are signs of early improvement, but more time is needed to thoroughly embed the new systems.

Since your appointment, your work to improve pupils' attendance has had an impact and overall attendance last term improved. While the attendance of some groups of pupils needs to rise further and levels of persistent absence remain too high, you have the right actions in place to address these issues.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that there is a culture of vigilance. Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of staff are fully in place and other statutory requirements are fully met. The school provides regular high-quality training for staff, governors and volunteers. Consequently, adults know what to do should they have any concerns about a pupil. The school involves outside agencies where necessary to facilitate timely and effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Governors are very knowledgeable about safeguarding and ensure that this aspect of the school's work is given high priority and meets current requirements.

Dunmore offers a very safe, caring and inclusive community. Pupils report that they

feel safe, make good friends and are happy at the school. Pupils feel well cared for and say that they have no concerns about bullying. They are confident that staff will listen to them if they have a concern and they trust adults to resolve any issues.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this visit, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on how well leaders and teachers are:
  - ensuring that pupils make strong progress during key stage 2
  - improving attendance and reducing persistent absence
  - improving the progress that key stage 1 pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics
  - ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least expected progress.
- Historically, pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been strong. Following a dip in the 2016 key stage 2 results in reading, writing and mathematics, you acted promptly to improve curriculum planning to address this underperformance. School leaders are now ensuring high-quality teaching, learning and assessment in key stage 2. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. They make consistent use of the school's feedback system in accordance with the school's policy, which helps pupils to improve their work. Pupils are now making strong progress in reading and writing.
- Recent training and new systems have improved the consistency of teaching in mathematics in key stage 2 this year. Pupils are currently making stronger progress, although more needs to be done to promote reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- The school's provision is enriched by activities such as regular outdoor learning and music lessons. However, the work scrutiny indicated that there is less consistently high challenge in science and the wider curriculum than there is in English. Leaders agree that pupils, particularly the most able pupils, should be further challenged by having more opportunity to apply their writing skills across the curriculum.
- In the past, pupils' progress in key stage 1 has been strong, but in 2016 there was a dip in the results in reading, writing and mathematics. You have made improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. As a result, current pupils are making stronger progress from their starting points than was the case last year. However, you are aware that more could be done to ensure that pupils who enter key stage 1 with low prior attainment make at least expected progress.
- The proportions of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 have declined over the last three years. You have taken decisive action to address this. The school now provides effective phonics teaching, including additional challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to motivate and challenge all groups of pupils.

- Generally, the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been strong. Leaders make good use of improved assessment systems to ensure that these pupils continue to make good progress. Leaders prioritise appropriate resources and support to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress in line with their peers. Teaching assistants support and challenge pupils well, through effective questioning to check their understanding. Strong leadership and teaching assistants' effective work ensure a wide variety of bespoke support for pupils' needs. Improved assessment procedures this year have enabled leaders to know where best to place a range of support to accelerate progress.
- You have prioritised improving attendance this year. Your systems to support parents and raise the profile and benefits of good attendance are yielding benefits. However, some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not yet attend regularly enough.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress in mathematics and the wider curriculum continues to improve
- teaching, learning and assessment supports all groups of pupils in key stage 1, particularly those with low prior attainment, to make good progress
- attendance figures continue to improve, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Darren Aisthorpe  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other leaders, pupils, governors and a representative of Oxfordshire local authority. We discussed the school's self-evaluation, its effectiveness and current performance. At the beginning of the day, we toured the school, visiting all classrooms. Later in the day, I paid further visits to eight lessons, some of which were visited jointly with senior leaders. I scrutinised a wide range of pupils' work with middle leaders. I took account of 50 responses to the staff survey and 122 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. I analysed a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and the development plan, information on pupils' progress, and safeguarding checks, procedures and policies.