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Mrs Sarah Holt
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Dear Mrs Sarah Holt

Short inspection of Panshanger Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders at Panshanger Primary School have continued to provide the good quality of education identified in the previous inspection report. Your focus on the academic and pastoral success of each of your pupils is shared by your leadership team and staff. Parents are overwhelmingly impressed by your hard work and commitment. This is evident in the many responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents commented on the 'professional level of teaching' and the 'lovely, family school'. One parent noted how Panshanger Primary 'not only extends learning through rich and well-balanced experiences but also nurtures, encourages and supports pupils as individuals'.

Together with the governing body, leadership has continued to improve the quality of education and pastoral support provided to pupils across the school. You have highly effective processes for monitoring and supporting teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, staff feel well supported and teaching across the school is strong. One parent's view that 'teachers and the management team are fantastic' was echoed by several others.

Governance at Panshanger Primary is strong. The governing body is well led and provides pertinent challenge alongside effective support. Governors know the school very well and demonstrate high levels of commitment to ensuring its continued success. They use the information gathered on school visits to question and challenge you and your leadership team.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are courteous, respectful and kind towards their classmates and adults. As a consequence, there is a harmonious learning environment

throughout the school. Pupils are eager to learn and enthusiastic about the topics they study. You have ensured that pupils study a rich curriculum whereby pupils' innate curiosity about the world is cultivated and extended. Pupils have a range of opportunities to develop their understanding about critical British values such as democracy, tolerance and free speech. For example, the school was awarded the Unicef Rights Respecting Award. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child underpins pupils' development as informed young citizens aware of their right to voice their views and questions about the school and the world beyond.

You correctly judge middle leadership to be a strength of the school. As part of an established leadership structure, they have ensured that changes to the curriculum are managed smoothly. As a result, the curriculum is both engaging and challenging for pupils. They provide continuous support to staff in their respective subject areas ensuring that all pupils develop a wide range of useful skills alongside subject knowledge. Consequently pupils make good progress across the curriculum.

You and your leaders take action where you consider improvements are required. For example, your focus on improving pupils' achievements in mathematics resulted in improved outcomes in 2016 and 2017 for most pupils at key stage 2. However, you recognise that there are still areas in which the school needs to improve. For example, your school improvement plan identifies the importance of accelerating pupils' achievements in mathematics as the most able pupils did not exceed the national average at key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017. You acknowledge also that you need to ensure that the precision with which pupils write in English is replicated in their writing in other subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils are articulate and confident at Panshanger Primary. Pupils told me how safe and protected they felt at the school. Pupils could tell me how they kept themselves safe when on the internet and why it was important to do so. All parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe, protected and happy in their learning.

Pupils know what forms bullying can take. They explained that bullying is very rare at the school and that if it occurs, it is dealt with speedily and effectively. Pupils respond to each other with kindness and empathy both in the classroom and in the playground.

Leaders, including governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are securely maintained and reviewed regularly. Records, including the checks made on adults who work at the school, are rigorously maintained. Inspection evidence affirms that staff provide timely and effective support to pupils in need of support.

Adults receive thorough training in their safeguarding duty. Inspection evidence demonstrates that staff are vigilant and alert to pupils' needs and changes in behaviour. Adults closely follow the school's safeguarding procedures when reporting and recording safeguarding concerns.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about how well leaders ensure that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress at both key stages. The most able pupils at key stage 2 in 2016 made progress in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the most able pupils at key stage 1 exceeded the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016.
- Due to improved teaching and learning and tracking of pupils' progress, in 2017, the most able pupils in key stage 2 significantly exceeded the national average for reading and writing. However, the most able pupils underachieved in mathematics in comparison to their national counterparts. You have acknowledged the issue and taken immediate action to improve pupils' achievements. You have reviewed the ways in which pupils develop their understanding of mathematical concepts and put in place improvements.
- You have identified the critical importance of reasoning in pupils' mathematical development. You have drawn on the support of Hertfordshire local authority and joined an innovative project designed to improve the teaching and learning of mathematical reasoning and fluency. It is, however, too early to evaluate the impact of these strategies.
- My second line of enquiry was about how well leaders ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well in mathematics at both key stages. This was identified as an area for development in the previous inspection report. In 2016 middle-ability pupils made progress significantly above the national expectation at key stage 2. In 2017 pupils made progress in line with the national expectation at key stage 1 and 2.
- You and your leadership team continually monitor and review the impact of strategies to accelerate pupils' progress. You regularly ask pupils their views about the mathematics curriculum and adapt your plans accordingly.
- I also sought to establish how well the curriculum met the needs of pupils. You and your leadership team have established an effective curriculum that both enriches and extends pupils' imaginations, skills and knowledge. Pupils told me how much they appreciated the opportunities that the school offers them.
- All pupils at key stage 2 learn a musical instrument. You recognise the valuable contribution that music makes to pupils' development. As a result, you have ensured that pupils throughout the school receive weekly music lessons from a specialist music teacher. Pupils also study French to a high level. For example, Year 3 pupils' books demonstrated their ability to construct sentences and vocabulary accurately.
- You have ensured that each subject leader has the resources to support the development of their respective subjects well. As a result, staff plan and deliver highly effective subject-specific lessons that extend pupils' skills of analysis and evaluation. For example, I observed a Year 3 science lesson where pupils articulated the experiments they had conducted and the evidence they had found about the effect of shape and distance on mirrors. I observed a Year 6 history lesson where pupils discussed in depth their evaluations about implements used during the Second World War in Britain. I also

observed a Year 5 class discuss the ways in which they developed their thinking in geography. As a result, pupils make good progress across the curriculum.

- Although pupils develop critical skills of analysis and evaluation in all areas of the curriculum, they do not have many opportunities to write at length. Pupils do not apply the writing skills they have developed so well in English to their writing in other subjects. As a result, pupils do not consistently develop their writing skills for a range of real purposes such as science investigations or evaluations of historical events.
- My final enquiry was about how well pupils keep themselves safe both in and outside of school. Pupils' behaviour in class is exemplary. They are kind, empathetic and considerate in their responses to each other. Pupils told me how much they enjoyed coming to school as they enjoy lessons and playing with their friends. Attendance for all pupils is good and many pupils attend the pre-school club where they have the opportunity to participate in a range of activities. The school's behaviour policy is robust, ensuring that issues are resolved quickly and effectively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils continue to develop their mathematical reasoning skills so that all pupils, including the most able, make increased progress
- pupils develop their writing skills in every area of the curriculum so that they develop the skills of writing for different purposes.

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

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the course of this inspection I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders and a group of four governors.
- I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school site. I also met formally with a group of 12 pupils.
- I visited a range of classes across early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- I undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders.

- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.
- A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; documents relating to pupils' achievement; attendance and behaviour; minutes of governor meetings and curriculum plans.
- I considered the views of 73 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 65 views parents expressed via the free-text service.