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Mrs Sarah Harrison  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Harrison

### **Short inspection of Kingsley Community Primary School and Nursery**

Following my visit to the school on 6 December 2016, 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 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment as headteacher, you have worked tirelessly to improve every aspect of the school's performance. You were, quite rightly, concerned that pupils, across the school, were not achieving as well as they could. Together with your leadership team, you have transformed the quality of provision in early years, strengthened the teaching of early reading skills and set consistently high standards for pupils' work across the school.

You have managed change well and have been successful in raising staff morale through effective support and development. Staff feel valued and listened to, and are proud to be working at the school. Parents have noticed this; for example, one parent commented on how 'passionate teachers are about educating my children'.

The majority of parents who spoke to me, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. A number of parents commented on the noticeable difference you have made to the performance of the school. Comments such as 'my daughter has progressed in leaps and bounds', 'standards have risen appreciably' and 'blown away by ... progress' are typical. Parents value the school's warm, friendly atmosphere. Parents enthuse about the opportunities to get involved in school life, such as through the parent forum, assemblies and curriculum workshops. Parents of the youngest children look forward to the daily 'stay and play' sessions.

You ensure parents receive a wealth of information about how their children are getting on in school. Teachers chat with parents at the beginning and end of the school day, parents are invited to class and school assemblies, there are regular events such as 'meet the teacher' at the start of the school year as well as formal parent teacher meetings. All pupils have a Kingsley Journal which promotes regular communication between home and school. You have introduced a parents' forum to improve engagement between school and home. You listened to parents' concerns about homework and together you developed the new homework policy. The majority of parents are confident that you and your staff will make time to meet with them when they are worried about something and will do your very best to find a resolution.

At the previous inspection, the inspector reported on the outstanding care, guidance and support. The views of your current pupils and parents, and my observations in all areas of the school, confirm that this strength has been maintained. In particular, parents who have moved their children to the school since you have taken up post, are delighted with how well you and your colleagues look after their children. As one new parent said; 'This is how schools should be'.

Since the last inspection, you have improved the quality of teaching in writing considerably. You have made sure that teachers share high quality texts with their classes, so that pupils have lots of ideas to include in their own pieces of writing. Teachers work alongside pupils to help them to edit and improve their writing. Teachers make sure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to write across the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils have recently written letters to businesses across the North West to ask them about their strategy to reduce their carbon footprint as part of a topic on climate change. Standards in writing have improved dramatically across the school, particularly in early years and key stage 1. At key stage 2, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are helping to eradicate the legacy of underperformance so that more pupils are reaching the high standards of which they are capable.

Your curriculum enriches pupils' understanding of the world, different cultures and what it means to be British. Year 5 pupils take their responsibilities as play leaders very seriously. Year 6 pupils are proud to be prefects and were keen to apply for the posts of head boy and head girl. Pupils appreciate the wealth of trips, visitors and clubs on offer. Pupils are proud to represent the school in mathematics competitions as well as sporting events and are delighted with their successes. However, more needs to be done to ensure your curriculum teaches pupils about the contribution made by both men and women of different races, ethnic groups and religious beliefs, to the country they live in today.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders and governors ensure that statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children.

Staff have up-to-date knowledge of current safeguarding requirements. They are vigilant about the risks posed to children because of the training they have received. Pupils are involved in the promotion of the positive safeguarding culture that exists in the school. For example, the enthusiastic team of eCadets teach their classmates how to stay safe, protect themselves from harm and take responsibility for their own and others' safety. During a recent anti-bullying week, every class shared their learning with the rest of the school through a special assembly. Pupils across the school had learnt about what bullying is, how both bullies and their victims feel and what to do if they ever felt worried or concerned about their own safety and that of others. Pupils report that bullying rarely happens at Kingsley, and that they are confident that teachers deal effectively with any rare occurrences.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Your improvement plan is focused on the right priorities and outlines what actions need to be taken. You have built a stable leadership team to help you achieve the ambitious goals you have set.
- Improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment mean that almost all pupils are making strong progress across the school. Despite the increased challenge of the new curriculum and new assessment and accountability measures, you have ensured that the majority of pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age. At key stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching standards above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national average in 2016.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils are passionate about reading. Pupils appreciate the wealth of high quality books they have to choose from in their class libraries. Pupils are looking forward to the new school library opening shortly. Across the school, pupils speak confidently about their favourite authors and genres.
- Your insistence on regular and effective phonics teaching is paying dividends. Almost all pupils now reach the expected standards in phonics by the end of Year 1. In 2016, by the end of Year 2, all pupils reached the expected standard.
- Pupils in early years now get off to a flying start. The teacher in charge of early years has brought a breath of fresh air to the department. She has rolled her sleeves up and set about transforming the learning environment. The classrooms are filled with well-considered, high-quality resources which interest and engage the children. Children are kind and considerate towards their classmates. They listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to share their ideas. Parents look forward to the daily stay and play sessions and are delighted with their children's progress.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of early years has risen dramatically. Furthermore, across some of the aspects including literacy and mathematics, children are now exceeding the standard expected for their age. Consequently, children are now better prepared for learning in Year 1. However, you are clear that even more children are capable of

these higher standards, across a broader range of aspects.

- The learning environment around the school, including in classrooms, is bright and informative. Pupils' work is celebrated and displays in classrooms provide pupils with hints and tips to help them with their learning.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They listen attentively to their teachers and respect their classmates' different points of view. Pupils work collaboratively together, helping each other to achieve success. For example, older pupils review their classmates' pieces of writing. They point out the strengths and offer carefully considered points for improvement.
- You keep a close eye on the achievement of all pupils, but pay special attention to the most vulnerable. Thanks to the determination of your inclusion lead, the attendance of these pupils is now exemplary.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making progress at least in line with other pupils with similar starting points nationally. You are acutely aware of the importance of further accelerating the progress of these pupils so that, by the time they leave Kingsley, they are attaining the expected standard and are well equipped for the rigours of secondary school.
- Your most able pupils approach the tricky problems and high expectations set by their teachers with gusto. Some of these pupils talked to me enthusiastically about the school's new approach to homework. They explained to me that each half term teachers set a menu of homework: 'starters' which are non-negotiable and focus on practising basic skills; 'main courses', of which pupils have to complete at least two; and the optional 'puddings'. The most able pupils are relishing the challenges set by the 'puddings', such as researching, designing and making a model of an ancient Egyptian pyramid. You recognise that by the end of key stage 2, more of these pupils should be achieving the higher standards and working at greater depth.
- Together, you and your staff have developed a well-considered, comprehensive curriculum. Pupils are excited by the interesting topics you have chosen. For example, the Year 5 teacher has ignited her pupils' curiosity about the rainforest. This teacher has skilfully planned the topic so that her pupils develop their skills and knowledge across the curriculum, including mathematics, art, science, literacy and geography.
- Your subject leaders are keen to play their part in improving the curriculum. The teacher in charge of religious education has revamped the school's approach to teaching this subject. Pupils are encouraged to consider questions which help them develop critical thinking skills, such as 'Can the Buddha's teachings make the world a better place?' when learning about Buddhism.
- You have the full support of the governing body. They are impressed by the improvements you have made to the school's performance. While governors talk positively about how well you work together, there is clear evidence that they do not shy away from challenging you and your colleagues when it is needed. Governors ensure that they seek external help to reassure themselves that they are asking the right questions and have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportions of pupils achieving above age-related expectations at the end of key stage 2, and children at the end of early years exceeding expectations, increases
- there are more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to learn about the contribution made by both men and women of different races, ethnic groups and religious beliefs to the country they live in today.

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

Yours sincerely

Pippa Jackson Maitland  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you as well as other senior leaders, teaching staff and members of the governing body. I also spoke to the local authority adviser who works with the school. I spoke with pupils during lessons and around the school. I met with a group of pupils and heard them read. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the information contained within responses to the online questionnaires for pupils, parents and staff, as well as the results of the school's own recent survey of parents. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and action plans and looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep children safe, recruitment checks and record-keeping.

The areas focused on during the inspection included:

- the effectiveness of the school's curriculum
- the quality of provision in early years
- how well the school meets the needs of its most able pupils
- the impact of the additional funding on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- how well the school deals with any parental concerns.