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Mr Steven Jones
Headteacher
Perins School
Pound Hill
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Perins School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 2017 with Mary Davies, Ofsted Inspector, 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 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 joined the school in September 2015 and have implemented significant changes, while remaining approachable to governors, staff, pupils and parents. Staff appreciate that you have made some courageous decisions to ensure that teachers and support staff are in the most appropriate roles, with a relentless focus on raising standards. You have managed the process of change with empathy so that you have the support of your colleagues. Pupils are aware of how their school has improved and are grateful for the 'tightening up of rules' and the breadth of extra-curricular activities that are now available. Parents describe the school as 'a fantastic school – well led and the children strive to be successful with wonderful support'.

You are developing a strong leadership culture that pervades the school. The effective leadership team models the high expectations that you have for staff and pupils. Staff know what is expected of them because leaders communicate the school's key priorities well. Teachers and support staff appreciate your keenness to know their views and respond accordingly. Staff believe that leaders do all they can to ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff.

Teachers have responded positively to your emphasis on improving the progress of those groups of pupils who were not achieving as well as others. Leaders are using additional funding to support disadvantaged and lower-attaining pupils appropriately. However, it is not yet having a consistent impact on pupils across

year groups and subjects.

You have established a very effective 'pupil support team' of teachers and other professionals, achieving your aim of the school being a 'comfortable place for staff and pupils alike'. Pupils and staff are happy to be at the school. Pupils wear their uniforms with pride.

Staff support families effectively to encourage their children to attend school. In 2016, pupils' attendance was below average when compared with other schools. Pupils' attendance has improved since September 2016 but some in Years 10 and 11 who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attend regularly.

Leaders' work with local primary schools is improving the school's standing in the community and is having an impact on the number of parents that are choosing the school for their children. Senior leaders' engagement with a local junior school has led to the Department for Education identifying your school as their preferred sponsor as they move to become an academy and join your planned multi-academy trust.

You provide governors with detailed information that they use to ask pertinent and probing questions about the impact of your leadership on the school. Your governors are very well organised in their planning to become a multi-academy trust.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection effectively. Senior and middle leaders now have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their areas and sensitively provide feedback where necessary. Teachers are now developing and testing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills more effectively in their lessons.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Soon after taking up your post, you took action to create a secure learning environment. Staff receive frequent and up-to-date training and briefings on safeguarding and child protection, often from those on your own staff who hold relevant professional qualifications. You ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on the suitability of staff before they are appointed and these are recorded diligently on a single central register.

Pupils manage their own behaviour well and are respectful to their peers and staff. Pupils are confident that members of staff have rapidly and effectively dealt with the rare incidents of bullying that have occurred. Pupils are confident that they are well equipped to live their lives safely because of the opportunities provided to learn about risks to their health, well-being and personal safety. Tutors provide a good programme of personal development, including the dangers of alcohol and

substance misuse, staying safe online, all types of bullying, and sexual and racial harassment. Experts provide advice on additional topics, for example sex and relationships, through assemblies and specialist teaching.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, as well as focusing on the quality of safeguarding and actions taken since the previous inspection, I pursued several lines of enquiry: the progress of pupils in mathematics and modern foreign languages; the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils, lower-attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; and the impact of leadership in evaluating and amending the curriculum.
- Leaders are taking effective action to improve the progress made by pupils in mathematics and modern foreign languages. You have appointed new leaders to both departments. Having accurately assessed that pupils make the most rapid progress in English and humanities lessons, you have created opportunities for staff from other departments to observe their strategies and learn from one another. Teachers have also benefited from participation in learning from an external school improvement organisation. These actions are diminishing the differences in progress between groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics and, to a lesser degree, in modern foreign languages.
- Teachers have targeted their efforts appropriately on supporting vulnerable pupils in Year 11 so that they achieve their potential in GCSE examinations. There are also some excellent examples of additional support in key stage 3. In some subjects, however, the progress made by a few pupils who are disadvantaged, are identified as having low ability on entry and who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slower than that of other pupils.
- This group of pupils is also benefiting from teachers' improved use of assessment information for day-to-day planning. Staff are now more aware of the different needs of pupils in lessons and are targeting support where it is most needed. Teachers of humanities, for example, engage pupils with activities that are matched well to their needs, provide support to help them write using historical terms and have established routines that increase pupils' confidence. Pupils notice that they are 'individuals within the class'.
- Leaders are now checking continuously on the progress of pupils who are disadvantaged and those who joined the school in Year 7 needing to catch up. You have appointed a teacher responsible for championing the needs of pupils who require extra support. Leaders are using additional funding appropriately to enable pupils to work in smaller groups in English and mathematics, for individual tutoring and for extra tuition outside lessons. Leaders have improved provision for current disadvantaged pupils by analysing the impact of the strategies used last year and adapting them well. As a result, disadvantaged and lower-attaining pupils' work in English, mathematics and science this year shows progress that is similar to, or better than, others.
- You have promoted the attendance of targeted groups of pupils as part of a broader support strategy. You have appointed counsellors, a social worker, a youth worker and an educational psychologist who are on hand to support pupils' well-being and help pupils to manage their own behaviour and enjoy their

learning. Pupils speak very highly of the services available and recognise this as being a special feature of their school. Leaders and members of the support team engage with families when needed, especially to increase the attendance of pupils who frequently miss too many days. Consequently, younger pupils' attendance is improving and the focus is rightly on the disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are regularly absent for long periods of time.

- Senior leaders have considered how effectively the school's well-established curriculum has prepared pupils for their next steps. In the light of evaluation, leaders are introducing courses better suited to the needs of lower-attaining pupils. They are also ensuring that the courses provide additional challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils in Year 8 feel that they are well supported to make their choices to start key stage 4 in Year 9.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on the effective strategies to support vulnerable pupils in Year 11 so that they are consistently applied across key stages 3 and 4
- the persistent absenteeism on the part of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs/disabilities in particular is reduced further.

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

Yours sincerely

Karen Roche
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors visited the school for one day. They met with you, your leadership team, staff and governors. Policies on safeguarding and child protection, your self-evaluation, development plan and other documents were scrutinised. With leaders, inspectors visited all year groups to see teaching and learning across a range of subjects. There were formal meetings with pupils as well as discussions with pupils around the school. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work over time while they were in lessons, in particular in English, humanities, mathematics, science, French and Spanish, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The 177 parent responses to Parent View, the 99 responses to the staff questionnaires and their comments, and 165 responses to the pupil questionnaire were also analysed.