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Ali Dakin
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Dakin

Short inspection of Harcourt Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 31 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have shown strong leadership and the appointment of energetic senior and middle leaders last September provided fresh impetus for further improvement. The continued success of the school is based on your detailed knowledge of your pupils and an unwavering determination to enable them to achieve as well as possible.

Leaders and governors have created a culture which is open and welcoming. A sense of mutual trust, respect and support pervades the school. Both staff and pupils are keen to learn and improve their skills. All members of the school's community acknowledge pupils' differences and work in harmony to help each other. This was evident even in Reception Year. In all of the classes, when pupils meet their targets, this is shared and celebrated by other pupils.

The school has improved since the last inspection because you, school leaders and governors use your accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school to prioritise actions to take. Leaders set out to address systematically aspects of the school which could be even better. Following the previous inspection, leaders took effective action to strengthen teaching throughout the school further. There are now more opportunities for staff to share the best practice. Leaders sensibly use more experienced practitioners to support newer ones, draw on local expertise and act on the sound advice of local authority advisers.

phonics check standard by the end of Year 1 is likely to meet the high levels previously achieved by the end of Year 2.

- Previously published results show that fewer pupils have achieved the highest standard of work compared with national levels. School leaders are aware of the need to address this, although it does not appear as a priority in the school's plans. The school's information shows that steps already taken to improve teaching and learning have improved the proportion of pupils working at greater depth.
- Leaders are trying a new strategy to improve attendance. They are participating in a project to reduce levels of absence of pupils whose attendance falls below 95%. The family liaison officer is working closely with other agencies to coordinate support for some target families.
- Leaders are working hard to improve parental engagement and, during the inspection, several parents were enjoying an informal event focusing on the teaching of mathematics. Parental support for the school is strong: nearly nine out of 10 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school.
- Highly committed senior and middle leaders have taken action to address some inconsistencies in pupils' performance across the school in different subjects and in different classes. They are very clear about what needs to be achieved and are systematic in their approaches to improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- sharpen their focus on raising the achievement of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
- continue work already started to improve levels of consistency of teaching across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Theresa Phillips
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your assistant headteacher, three middle leaders and two governors including the chair of the governing body. I also met a representative of Kent Local Authority. I visited classes across all year groups in the school with you. I reviewed samples of pupils' work in writing, mathematics and topic books across key stages 1