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Mr Gareth Drawmer
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Dear Mr Drawmer

Short inspection of Juniper Hill School

Following my visit to the school on 23 February 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 May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Pupils attain good standards. They behave extremely well and display highly positive attitudes to all they do. Pupils in the additionally resourced provision (ARP) make strong progress from their starting points. The ARP specialises in providing support to pupils who have physical disabilities. All pupils integrate well with each other, caring for and looking out for each other sympathetically. Leaders ensure that a positive and inclusive atmosphere pervades the school.

Leaders also ensure that the school makes a positive contribution to each pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As well as making the most of opportunities afforded by a strong formal curriculum, teachers make good use of the forest school setting adjacent to the school field, trips to places of interest and a full programme of assemblies. I observed an assembly where the key stage 2 pupils were sensitively and skilfully encouraged to reflect on how 'outsiders' can sometimes become subject to bullying. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the nature of bullying. Pupils are clear that bullying happens only rarely in school. They also made clear that they know what to do if it occurs, who to speak to and what will happen. Even the youngest pupils are developing a strong sense of the difference between right and wrong. All are developing the appropriate British value of respect for others.

Teachers work effectively in teams. They share planning and preparation efficiently so that across year groups pupils have an equal opportunity to learn. The staff team contains a number of highly effective practitioners who are able to demonstrate to others proven ways of enabling pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers use a wide range of techniques to encourage pupils to think about their learning. Teachers also make effective use of a good supply of resources and materials. For example, the teaching of art is supported by powerful imagery. The forest school setting is enhanced by the presence of a local colony of red kites. Purposeful mathematics teaching, which is leading to increasingly strong outcomes, is supported by teaching which uses the correct technical language. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good in all aspects of the curriculum.

Children make a strong start to their schooling in the well-appointed, suitably staffed and rigorously managed early years setting. Careful thought is given to ensuring that Reception children receive targeted teaching to help them get ready for Year 1. For example, some children were seen writing complete sentences with real words, using key words for the week. Others were learning to sound out and write correctly the key words as appropriate to their existing levels of knowledge and understanding. All worked with interest and enthusiasm.

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to 'raise the attainment and progress of all pupils to the highest level'. Inspectors suggested a number of ways in which this could happen, including encouraging children to work independently. Ofsted no longer favours particular approaches. Inspectors are required, however, to evaluate the impact of current teachers' chosen actions on pupils' progress and attainment. They are also required to note pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils at Juniper Hill School display real passion and enthusiasm for learning. You ensure that the staff have access to lots of ideas and initiatives, including how to inspire and motivate pupils. You also provide staff with regular training so that they keep improving their practice. As a result, most pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. You are rightly concentrating now on increasing pupils' rates of progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders ensure that all procedures are undertaken securely. Safeguarding arrangements are, therefore, fit for purpose. The checks carried out on persons wishing to work at, volunteer in, or support pupils' learning at Juniper Hill are thorough. Records of such checks are maintained to a high standard. Most of the relevant policies on the website meet requirements though some are due for review and updating in the current term.

Governors assist you to ensure that staff training is up to date and focused appropriately on current issues in safeguarding. I saw records of the comprehensive range of training on matters such as paediatric first aid and the school's 'Prevent' duty. Governors also oversee the arrangements for maintaining the health and safety of all staff and pupils. The site is well maintained and secure. Similarly, the

arrangements for drop-off and collection mean that traffic is kept at an appropriate distance from the playground.

Inspection findings

- Published information about the school indicates that the amount of progress made by pupils from key stage 1 to key stage 2 does not always match their strong attainment. The published information also indicates that pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities have much higher levels of absence than is the case nationally. I explored these specific issues during the inspection, while examining overall the quality of education provided at Juniper Hill.
- Pupils enter Reception at levels of attainment close to or above those expected for their age. Most are enthusiastically supported by their parents. Parents, in general, are highly ambitious for their children and are keen to work alongside teachers in extending and challenging all to do as well as possible. Outcomes for pupils are strong in early assessments of their attainment such as the phonics check in Year 1. Children's attainment of a good level of development in Reception is well above the national average.
- Pupils continue to make steady progress in key stage 2, thus reaching high levels of attainment. The vast majority achieve good results in end of key stage tests. However, a larger proportion of pupils should go on to attain even higher levels, especially in writing and mathematics, given the strong start they get to school, their natural interest in learning and their supportive home backgrounds. The tiny minority of disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as they could. This is also the case for the small number of pupils with low levels of prior attainment.
- We agreed that progress is, therefore, the key priority for the school, so that all pupils do as well as they can. Higher-attaining pupils need additional challenge to be able to work consistently at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. Lower-attaining pupils need more focused support to increase the rate with which they catch up with their peers. Disadvantaged pupils need additional support to ensure that they do as well as other pupils nationally.
- A large minority of the parents who completed the survey or used Parent View to write a comment, indicated that they do not always know how well their children are doing. We agreed that this did not match the findings of the school's own survey of parents undertaken in the last year. It did, however, align with remarks made by some parents I met on the playground.
- You showed me detailed and helpful information about the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You also showed me case studies of work that the special educational needs coordinator and her impressive team have undertaken to limit the impact of extended absence on such pupils. This information shows clearly that these pupils have unavoidable absence at times, due to medical appointments or hospital admissions related to their physical conditions.

- We agreed that the other pupils have above average attendance. Overall, therefore, attendance is good.
- Leaders rightly judge the school to be good. Governors share this accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance. The local authority also judges the school to be performing at a good level. All agree that the school is on a journey towards being the best it can be. Certainly, the pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to learning and the care teachers have for them are already exceptionally strong.
- You showed me a range of documents which record this evaluation, alongside your reports to the governors and the school's development plans. Most of the documents are long and comprehensive and help leaders review weekly progress against the overall plans. However, the volume of material sometimes masks the focused detail required for leaders to sustain rapid school improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils, especially those with low prior attainment, those who are disadvantaged and those who are exceptionally able, make as much progress as possible
- all methods of evaluating and recording the school's relative strengths and areas for development are reported concisely and feed into focused development plans
- parents understand fully how well their children are doing.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

You led me on a tour of the school and we jointly observed learning in each class. I examined a range of the school's documentation, including an example of your reports to the governors. I also looked at your development plans. I met with you and senior leaders several times during the inspection. I met with governors and a representative of the local authority. I met with parents informally on the playground before school and examined 157 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online survey tool. I compared the findings of this questionnaire with the results of your own survey conducted last year. I took into account 85 free text responses which parents submitted through Parent View. I met with a group of four teachers

and considered 31 responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey. I met with a group of seven pupils and took account of 247 responses to Ofsted's confidential pupil survey. I spoke with many other children informally while touring the school.