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Mrs K Sandberg  
Headteacher  
Borough Green Primary School  
School Approach  
Borough Green  
Sevenoaks  
Kent  
TN15 8JZ

Dear Mrs Sandberg

### **Short inspection of Borough Green Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 2018, 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 your school was judged to be good in June 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your determined leadership and strong vision for improvement are highly valued by staff, parents and carers, and governors. You are unrelenting in your ambition to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils. As a result, pupils across the school achieve well. You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, you have identified appropriate improvement priorities, which has resulted in more pupils making accelerated progress.

You have recently appointed two new assistant headteachers from within the school. They have helped strengthen an already effective leadership team. Together, you have an ambitious drive for improvement and a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all year groups. The staff work successfully to give all pupils the opportunity to thrive in a positive and nurturing environment. One parent, whose views were typical of many, wrote: 'This is an excellent school – all our children have flourished here both academically and socially.'

All leaders and governors are united in their aim to enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can, and to be fully prepared for the challenges of life beyond primary school. Governors know the school well because they draw evidence from a range of sources. They are effective in challenging you and your leadership team to bring about further improvements in the school.

There is a strong family ethos underpinning this school. Parents, staff and pupils commented on the way that everyone puts pupils' best interests at the heart of the school's work. Leaders have developed a strongly inclusive culture in the school, which pupils understand and embrace. The majority of parents are full of praise for the school. One parent said: 'There is an overriding feeling of belonging and family.' A small minority of parents would value more information and guidance on how they can help their children at home.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy all that it has to offer. They are friendly, polite and self-assured, welcoming visitors and readily sharing their views about the school. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Classrooms are bright and orderly places where pupils work hard and achieve well. Displays in classrooms and around the school reflect the high standards that leaders promote, and celebrate pupils' many achievements across the curriculum.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to strengthen middle leadership. You have developed your team so that subject leaders regularly scrutinise pupils' work, review planning and provide training for staff to strengthen the quality of teaching across all areas of the curriculum. They have made sure that teachers have secure subject knowledge, so that they are well equipped to teach the full range of subjects. However, not all staff follow the school's assessment policy consistently. Teachers plan lessons that are based on a carefully constructed curriculum framework, which provides pupils with many memorable and engaging learning experiences. As a result of regular checks, the leaders for English, mathematics and science have a good understanding of the progress pupils are making in their subjects. However, leaders in other subjects do not have enough opportunities to monitor pupils' achievements. You and your leadership team are currently working to address this issue.

The school was also asked to support teachers to deliver high-quality mathematics lessons. Your focus on the teaching of mathematics brought about significant improvements in attainment in 2017. However, as you acknowledge, progress was not as strong as attainment, particularly for the most able pupils. Now, teachers seek to challenge all pupils by asking searching questions and providing work that deepens their understanding.

Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 improved in 2017. However, the proportion of pupils, in particularly the boys, who achieved the higher standards remained below national figures in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This has since been a focus for the school. Consequently, a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve both the expected and the higher standards at the end of Year 6 this year. Most pupils currently in the school are making good progress in the development and application of these basic skills. You have, sensibly, included rigorous monitoring of both progress and attainment in your plans to further improve pupils' achievement.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Together with senior leaders and governors, you have ensured that the school has a culture that places a relentless focus on making sure that pupils are safe and well cared for. One parent commented: 'The school nurtures children as individuals.'

Leaders ensure that all who work in the school have the right training from the moment that they start their work. This training is regularly reviewed, refreshed and updated, so that staff are thoroughly equipped to look after pupils. As a result, all staff have a detailed understanding of how to recognise and report concerns about pupils' well-being. Staff record even minor concerns assiduously, because they recognise that their observation may form part of a much bigger picture of wider concerns later on. Staff carry out all the right checks, so that only suitable people are allowed to work in the school. Governors confirm regularly that these checks have been carried out correctly.

Pupils feel entirely safe in school and part of the school's family. They trust the staff completely to look after them. Bullying is very rare and quickly dealt with when it does arise. One pupil said: 'You can rely on your teachers if you have a worry.' Pupils said that, although the playground is busy, it is a friendly place, where they feel safe and where pupils look after each other. Teachers provide lessons to help pupils stay safe in a range of situations, including around water, in the sun and when riding a bicycle.

## **Inspection findings**

- Across the school, teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and this enthusiasm for learning is passed on to the pupils. Classrooms are welcoming and positive places to be. Teachers plan topics and lessons that engage pupils' interests. Regular staff training helps teachers to plan effectively. Staff are aware of the need to ensure that activities match the needs of different groups of pupils and most pupils are making good progress. A focus on ensuring that more pupils who are of average ability make good progress has been successful. Ensuring appropriate provision for the most able pupils has been an area for development this year and this is already having a positive impact across the school.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling has improved since the last inspection, because teachers reinforce these skills across a range of subjects. The proportion of boys reaching the higher standards is increasing, as evidenced by the quality of their written work. Across the school, there has also been a focus on improving the boys' enthusiasm for reading, and their comprehension skills. One boy said, 'If I have a choice, I don't watch television, I read instead.' The high priority given to reading for pleasure and for information is supporting all pupils' work in many other subjects.
- As a school, you are focusing on improving outcomes in writing. While these are not yet as strong as you would like them to be in every year group, more pupils are working at the standard expected for their age and rates of progress are improving. Whenever practical, teachers use the context of class topics to help engage pupils in their writing. For instance, pupils in Years 1 and 2 wrote diary

entries linked to Charles Dickens, as part of their topic on local history. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have written biographies about female scientists, linked to their studies of rocks and fossils. Teachers provide clear examples to support pupils' writing and pupils have regular opportunities to write for an audience or a specific purpose. The school has a clear assessment policy, for staff to give feedback to pupils on how to improve their work. However, not all staff follow this policy consistently.

- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics is proving effective in developing pupils' confidence and supporting their mathematical understanding. There is a focus on developing pupils' basic skills before providing opportunities, at a range of levels, for them to apply these skills through problem-solving activities. The lesson structure enables teachers to give immediate feedback to pupils. Additional support, for pupils who require it, is provided in a timely way.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and based on the national curriculum. It provides pupils with engaging learning experiences. You and your subject leaders maintain a careful check on curriculum coverage and the relevance of the experiences to the pupils. You and your leadership team regularly track and assess pupils' progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, you do not currently have detailed information about how well pupils are developing knowledge, skills and understanding within other subjects.
- Pupils benefit from being able to access a wide range of trips, visitors and extra-curricular activities, all of which help to bring the curriculum to life.
- Provisional information for 2017/18 shows that pupils' attendance is strong and is likely to be above the national average. You are aware that the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is lower than that of other pupils. You carefully track this and work directly with parents when attendance drops below an acceptable level. The importance of attending regularly, and on time, has a high profile within school. The procedures you and your staff follow, including contacting parents on the first day of absence and working with external agencies, help to ensure that pupils are safe and not at risk of going missing from education.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- subject leaders have increased opportunities to evaluate pupils' progress in developing knowledge, skills and understanding across the full range of subjects
- all staff follow the school's assessment policy consistently.

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

Jo Lakey  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

We discussed the lines of enquiry for this inspection, the school's evaluation of its performance, plans for improvement and current pupils' achievement. I had meetings with senior and middle leaders, a group of the school's governors and the school's local authority improvement adviser. I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This included observations with you in all classes. I looked at a sample of pupils' current work. I spoke informally to pupils about their learning and met more formally with two groups of pupils to talk about their experience of school. Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks. A discussion was held with you, as the school's designated safeguarding lead. The views of parents I met at the start of the day, and those of 48 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, including the responses parents made using the free-text facility. A further 90 responses to the recent school survey were reviewed. I also considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 15 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.