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Shelly Hancock  
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Dear Miss Hancock

### **Short inspection of Geoffrey Field Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 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 the school was judged to be good in December 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since starting in September, you have wasted no time in improving this friendly and popular school. You have recruited and trained a strong and ambitious leadership team, recognising the talent that already existed within the staff. Parents and carers have responded warmly to your strong leadership; every single parent who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey feels that the school is well led and managed. One parent summarised the thoughts of many, noting, 'My daughter loves every minute at this school. The teachers are lovely and any concerns I have are always dealt with quickly.'

The governing body is experienced and ambitious for the pupils. Governors possess impressive skills and use these to check the quality of the school and challenge leaders to do even better. Governors monitor the quality of teaching carefully and work with leaders to check that their actions are improving outcomes for pupils. As a result, the school continues to improve.

Pupils enjoy their time at Geoffrey Field and both their behaviour and attitudes to learning reflect this. In class, pupils work with pride and industry, confidently discussing their thinking with partners and willingly sharing their ideas with the class. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the extensive range of after-school clubs they can attend, such as the story theatre, street-dance and 'boomwhackers' music club. On the playground, pupils play well together. They said that bullying is rare and, when incidents do occur, staff are good at helping them to sort out their problems. Recent changes to the school's approach to absence have led to

demonstrable improvements in pupils' attendance, particularly for those who are disadvantaged. Rewards, such as attendance badges and even a new bike keep attendance at the forefront of pupils' minds.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching in the school. You and your team work collaboratively with all staff to improve their teaching, and pupils make good progress as a result. Teachers benefit from regular feedback and the opportunity to plan with and observe other, highly skilled practitioners. The support for newly qualified teachers is particularly strong. These colleagues benefit from dedicated mentoring from an experienced teacher who provides them with just the right balance of support and challenge. You recognise that, while teaching has improved across the school, some staff still require support to stretch pupils, particularly those who are capable of attaining at a high standard. In particular, not enough pupils reach high standards in reading.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Statutory recruitment checks are completed on all staff before they commence employment at the school. Pupils' safety is at the top of the agenda for the school. Leaders, rightly, ensure that all school staff engage in regular update training that reflects national and local concerns. Governors visit the school and work with local authority officers to ensure that procedures are effective. When staff do raise a concern, leaders waste no time, referring families to the appropriate agency and getting them the help they need.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. The well-trained and knowledgeable 'digital leaders' teach their peers about online safety and how to report concerns when they arise. Pupils know not to share too much online and, when in doubt, can report concerns directly to the National Crime Agency via a button on the school's website. Parents are supported to keep their children safe. For example, leaders run workshops for parents, teaching them how to protect their children online and offering to set up secure settings on mobile devices, computers and even televisions.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at: the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements; the quality of support for disadvantaged pupils in reading; the quality of teaching in mathematics for pupils who are previously low attaining; and how effectively leaders and governors evaluate and improve the school.
- In September, leaders reviewed and overhauled the reading curriculum to encourage pupils to read and comprehend more challenging texts. Working with governors, they purchased new books for classrooms and the library and trained teachers in how to incorporate reading into different subjects, such as geography and history. Reading lessons are now sharply focused on teaching pupils to interpret and explain what they have read in a text. As a result, the progress of pupils, particularly those who were previously low attaining and disadvantaged

pupils, has accelerated. Leaders are now working to ensure that tasks routinely encourage pupils to read and respond to texts at a high standard.

- Pupils who fall behind in mathematics receive expert support to help them address misconceptions and to catch up with their peers. In several year groups, you have employed, at significant financial cost, additional teachers to provide bespoke tuition to pupils. These lessons are sharply focused on developing pupils' key fluency skills, such as arithmetic and times tables' knowledge, helping pupils in these classes make rapid progress. Well-trained teaching assistants support pupils to access their work and ask probing questions to test pupils' understanding. Pupils across the school typically receive challenging mathematics work, which enables them to think critically and reason. As a result, pupils at all levels make strong progress in mathematics.
- Leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness are evidence based and accurate. Senior leaders are reflective, critical and motivated. When weaknesses are identified, they take the right action to secure improvements. Their efforts to tackle excessive staff workload have been creative and effective. Working with staff from across the school, they have revitalised the school assessment policy, eradicating ineffective and inefficient activities and helping staff to gain a more stable work-life balance through flexible home working. Governors and leaders work well in their respective roles. For example, a governor recently worked with the mathematics leader to moderate pupils' work, gaining a useful insight into the school's assessment procedures and pupils' outcomes. Leaders and governors are well placed to secure further improvement.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' reading progress accelerates so that greater proportions attain at a high standard
- the few remaining inconsistencies in teaching are ironed out so that all pupils routinely receive work that challenges them.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, senior and middle leaders, and five governors, including the chair. I observed learning in 10 classes, all jointly with senior leaders. Together, we looked

at pupils' work. I analysed a range of the school's documentation including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I considered 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. I scrutinised the results of Ofsted's pupils' survey and gathered the views of other pupils throughout the day.