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John Jones  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Jones

### **Short inspection of Old Sarum Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since opening in 2011, the school has expanded rapidly. During this time, you have been determined in your commitment to improving the quality of teaching and the standards that pupils achieve. Leaders know the school well. You set high expectations and readily accept that there is always room for improvement. You check on pupils' learning effectively and support teachers to improve their teaching. As a result, standards are rising and pupils, including those who join the school at different times of the year, make good progress. The governing body gives you unwavering support and rigorous challenge. Governors understand their role and bring a good range of different skills and experiences to bear on their work.

The school's inclusive ethos is a strength. You work hard to ensure that all pupils are valued and welcomed. Pupils who join the school during, rather than at the start of, the school year appreciate the friendships they quickly make. Parents I spoke to during the inspection welcome your efforts to support their children at school. All staff work tirelessly to ensure pupils' well-being and to enable them to make good progress in their academic and personal development. Staff establish positive and trusting relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and say that lessons are challenging and fun. A typical comment made by a pupil was that 'the best thing about our school is the teachers'.

Pupils behave well in and around the school. They enjoy the lunchtime play equipment and being with the adults who play alongside them. The many pupils I spoke to during the inspection say that behaviour is good in and around the school. They say that bullying is not common and they are confident that staff deal with it effectively.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your governors have created a strong culture for keeping pupils safe in the school. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. You work closely with a range of external agencies and take decisive action when required to keep pupils safe from harm. Comprehensive risk assessments help ensure that pupils and staff are safe.

Staff and governors receive regular training in child protection, which means they understand their responsibilities fully. They know what to do and who to go to if they have a concern about a child. They understand how to keep pupils safe from sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. Leaders and governors understand the importance of safer recruitment. Checks on staff before they are employed are thorough.

Pupils understand how to keep safe online and they appreciate the school's annual 'safety week', where they learn about how to keep safe outside school. Pupils say they feel safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, I met with you to discuss the key lines of enquiry I would follow to ensure that the school remains good. First, we agreed that I would focus on the actions leaders had taken to tackle the dip in standards at key stage 2 in 2017. Second, I examined whether the most able pupils do well. In addition, I looked at how leaders have improved pupils' attendance at school. Finally, I explored what the school does to ensure that new pupils make as much progress as possible.
- Outcomes for pupils who completed Year 6 in 2017 dipped and were lower than for pupils completing key stage 2 in previous years. You have identified correctly that this was largely due to circumstances that were unique to this group of pupils. Nevertheless, you have made changes to ensure that standards rise in Year 6 and across the school. You have strengthened the quality of teaching and ensured that teachers now check on pupils' learning more effectively. Current Year 6 pupils are working at the level expected for their age and are making good progress. Throughout the school, standards are improving in English and mathematics and pupils' progress continues to be good.
- In the past, not enough pupils reached the higher standards. This is no longer the case in key stage 2 and the Reception classes. Here, teachers have high expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve. In Year 5, for example, teaching now challenges pupils to improve their written work to a high standard. In Year 6, pupils enjoy tackling complex reasoning tasks which extend their skills

and really make them think. In addition, teachers make effective use of the school's system which helps pupils identify what they do well and where they need to improve. As a result, the most able pupils in key stage 2 do well. However, you recognise that in key stage 1, teachers do not always give the most able pupils tasks which challenge them to work at a higher standard. Sometimes, pupils spend too long on activities which are too simple. As a result, the most able pupils in key stage 1 are not achieving as well as they could.

- You know that attendance has been persistently too low. In response, you have established clear and effective procedures to follow up absences on the first day. You receive daily reports which enable you to monitor absences more closely. You work extensively with school staff, outside agencies and families of disadvantaged pupils to reduce persistent absence. Although levels of attendance have started to rise, you recognise they are not yet high enough.
- Often, children from military families start school at different times of the year, joining classes across the school. You are highly aware of the need to ensure that these pupils settle quickly. You have ensured that you have very effective systems which support pupils' academic, medical and emotional needs extremely well. Teachers check carefully what their new pupils already know and can do as soon as they arrive. They use this information well to ensure that learning matches their needs. In addition, you use teaching assistants very effectively to help these pupils catch up rapidly on any learning they have missed. Parents I spoke to during the inspection were full of praise for the way you support their children when they arrive. Pupils spoke of being made to feel welcome by other pupils in the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- learning planned for pupils in key stage 1 provides greater challenge, especially for the most able, so that more of them achieve the higher standards
- pupils' attendance continues to improve, including the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Lucas  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, your senior leaders, governors and staff. I spoke to many pupils across the day in lessons and at lunchtime. I visited 13 lessons to observe learning. We looked at pupils' workbooks together. I considered documentary evidence relating to the impact of the school's work, including the school's internal tracking of pupils, documents concerning safeguarding and attendance, and reports to governors. I took into account 25 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, as well as survey responses from 16 pupils and three staff. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.