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Mr Anthony Hutchings
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hutchings

Short inspection of Glen Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 2019, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2012. The school joined Plym Academy Trust (the trust) in September 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have successfully established a cohesive and determined senior leadership team that has a shared passion and commitment to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best. Middle leaders share senior leaders' drive and commitment for continuous improvement. They lead strongly through example and hold positions of expertise, including in phonics and English.

The trust has provided professional development that has had a discernible impact upon improving teaching. This has enabled teaching staff to develop their skills even further. As a result of highly effective teaching, pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics are strong.

Staff morale is high. All staff who completed the staff survey are fully behind the leadership of the school. Together with your united staff, you have created an environment where pupils' learning is at the heart of all decision-making. Striking, high-quality displays showcase pupils' latest work from across the school and clearly

demonstrate pupils' enjoyment of school alongside the high expectations placed upon them.

The regular checks that senior and middle leaders carry out have ensured that all groups of pupils make strong progress from their different starting points. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their view that their children are taught well and make good progress in the school. One comment, typical of the views of many parents, was: 'Glen Park is an absolutely fantastic school, our children love it there and their progress is amazing.'

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are caring towards each other and have well-developed, positive attitudes to learning. The pupils I spoke with said that they 'enjoy school because teachers make it fun'. Pupils in Year 5 were keen to tell me how their visit to Powderham Castle brought their learning about the Victorians alive. They spoke enthusiastically of how dressing in attire and eating food from the Victorian era deepened their knowledge and understanding of life in Victorian times.

In 2018, pupils' progress and attainment by the end of key stage 2 was strong in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils continue to make very strong progress across the school in a range of subjects.

Governors have an effective strategic oversight of the school. They visit the school regularly to check upon the impact of leaders' work and contribute well to school improvement. They ensure that actions that leaders take result in positive outcomes for pupils. Governors are relentless in their drive and commitment for continuous improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. In your role as designated safeguarding lead, you have ensured that all staff are vigilant towards risks associated with keeping children safe. All staff are aware of how to report any concerns they have. As a result of regular training, staff are knowledgeable about the signs of abuse and how to report any concerns they may have.

Pupils were adamant that there is no bullying in the school. They told me that if they have any worries or concerns they can go and see a member of staff at lunchtime. Pupils receive good guidance on how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. They clearly articulate the risks associated with using the internet and social media. The many responses on Parent View confirmed that nearly all parents feel that their children are safe in school. This view is echoed in both the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection we agreed lines of enquiry that I wanted to explore further. My first line of enquiry was to look at the provision for disadvantaged children in early years. At the start of 2018 you recognised the need to further

improve disadvantaged children's outcomes and made strategic decisions to review the provision. You secured considerable financial investment and have created a setting that enables children to thrive from the moment they start their learning journey at Glen Park. Children learn in a vibrant environment. It is well resourced and a hive of activity.

- Adult- and child-led activities develop and promote children's basic reading and mathematical skills well. Children are curious, and staff encourage them to use what they know to develop further their understanding of the world. For example, during the inspection, I observed children inquisitively asking probing questions to complete a science experiment.
- The achievement of those currently in the early years shows that children are now making stronger progress than they have previously. Furthermore, work in children's books demonstrates that leaders' actions have resulted in a significant impact on improving children's outcomes.
- Next, we looked at early reading skills. This was because in 2017 and 2018 the number of disadvantaged pupils passing the phonics check was too low. The leader responsible for phonics teaching has ensured that all members of staff are trained well to teach phonics to children of differing abilities. The systematic approach helps the children to master early reading skills. Nevertheless, a small proportion of disadvantaged pupils are not making as strong progress as other pupils. This is because, pupils are not identified swiftly enough if they start to fall behind.
- Another area that I explored was the teaching of writing to the most able pupils in writing across key stage 2. This was because in 2018, pupils from high starting points did not achieve as well as pupils from low and middle starting points. You and your middle leaders told me how you have further refined your approach to teaching writing using good-quality texts.
- Your leaders review the books that teachers choose to teach reading to ensure that they motivate pupils as a stimulus for writing. You also view these book choices as a vehicle to broaden pupils' vocabulary and promote equality across the curriculum. During the inspection, pupils told me that they enjoy the writing lessons because it helps them connect their learning with their topic work. The benefits of well-planned writing could be seen on display from other curriculum subjects. Pupils also told me that recently the quality of texts made available to them has improved significantly and this has deepened their love of reading.
- Teachers set tasks at the appropriate level to challenge pupils and give pupils precise guidance, so that they can improve their work. Together, we looked at a sample of pupils' writing assessment books. Writing in pupils' books and current performance information show that pupils are making strong progress from their different starting points. The standards of writing pupils are reaching are very high. Writing is a clear strength of the school.
- My final line of enquiry was to establish whether leaders have taken effective action to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. While attendance overall is better than the national average, attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils are not as high as for others in the school. You have established thorough systems that enable your staff to monitor closely pupils' attendance and are quick

to identify pupils where attendance is a concern. You work with parents and carers closely to ensure that they understand why their children need to attend school regularly. You match support to the individual needs of families and pupils. When attendance does not improve, you and your leaders make appropriate use of external agencies. As a result, the current attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving rapidly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils continue to make consistent progress in reading and writing so that they achieve better by the end of key stage 1.

I am copying this letter to chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of Plym Academy Trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Plymouth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matt Middlemore
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the chief executive officer, senior and middle leaders, and five members of the local governing body. I considered the 78 responses to Parent View, including the free-text comments, and met with a group of parents at the start of the school day. I spoke with pupils formally and informally during the day. I also considered the 31 responses to the staff survey, and 69 responses to the pupil survey. Along with senior leaders, I observed teaching and learning and I listened to a sample of pupils read. Together, we looked at a range of pupils' work in exercise books. I scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the single central record, current performance information, your school self-evaluation and the most recent improvement plan.