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Mrs Joanne Smith  
Rudyard Kipling Primary School & Nursery  
Chalkland Rise  
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BN2 6RH

Dear Mrs Smith

### **Short inspection of Rudyard Kipling Primary School & Nursery**

Following my visit to the school on 3 May 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 your school was judged to be good in May 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have worked very effectively with your school team to improve the quality of teaching since your appointment in September 2015. You have steered the school through an unsettled time, including numerous changes in staffing. The school is now benefiting from a more settled phase. Teachers are committed to playing their part in raising standards and staff morale is high. Most parents are pleased with the school. They say their children are happy in school and that teachers listen carefully to what parents have to say.

You and your team responded quickly to weaker writing outcomes at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 and a dip in the Year 1 phonics check results. You have made substantial improvements to the quality of teaching in these subjects during the past year. As a result, pupils are more securely equipped with key reading and writing skills than previously.

You have strengthened the school's capacity to secure further improvements by making some significant appointments to the leadership team, including the appointment of key stage leaders and subject leaders. Your leaders share the same high expectations of staff and pupils and provide strong role models for their colleagues. They work constructively with teachers, checking pupils' learning and providing clear, consistent advice about what teachers can do to develop their practice.

You and your team are determined to ensure that all pupils do their best and achieve well, regardless of their background or ability. Skilful teaching, including specialist support provided in your school's 'nurture room', ensures that all groups of pupils make equally good progress, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, teaching is not yet sufficiently strong across the school to deepen and extend pupils' understanding fully enough in mathematics. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should in this subject.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy welcoming visitors and are understandably proud of their school. They get on well together and respect the views of others. They move around school sensibly and behave well during lessons. Pupils' good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the quality of their learning and to their progress over time. However, some pupils do not behave as well as they should in the playground during the lunchtime break. You and your leaders have already identified this aspect of the school's work as a priority for development and have made a good start in improving pupils' behaviour during lunchtime. For example, you have introduced a range of playground activities which help to make the lunchtime break more purposeful and fun. However, you recognise that more needs to be done. You have suitable plans in place, including further training to develop adults' expertise in supporting pupils' behaviour.

Governance has improved since the previous inspection. For example, governors come into school to meet and work with members of staff more frequently than before and so have a much clearer view of the school's performance. They challenge leaders effectively by asking searching questions about the quality of teaching and learning. Governors appreciate your honest, open and professional approach to leading the school. One governor commented on improvements in teamwork since you were appointed, saying, 'Everyone listens – at all levels and across the school.'

You have addressed the issues for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection effectively by improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Pupils learn increasingly well as a result, particularly during key stage 1.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You, your staff and your governors give pupils' safety an appropriately high priority. You and your team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are of high quality and detailed. You make sure safeguarding policies are regularly updated so that your team members are clear about the steps they should take if they have a concern. You make good use of training to ensure that staff and governors have a confident and up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding requirements and procedures. Your recently appointed business manager has made a good start by familiarising himself with the school's safeguarding procedures and by checking that records are complete.

You and your team ensure that the school is tidy and attractive so that it is a welcoming and secure place for staff and pupils. At the time of my visit, technical difficulties meant that some aspects of the safeguarding documents on the school's website were out of date. However, you are well aware of the issue and continue to work with the website provider to make sure key information is updated and accessible. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school.

## **Inspection findings**

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on: how well leaders and governors ensure that all groups of pupils are safe and attend well; how effectively leaders use the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement; how well teaching during key stage 1 supports pupils' learning in writing; and how effectively leaders have addressed the dip in the Year 1 phonics screening check which occurred in 2016.
- Well-established systems and carefully organised records ensure that leaders are able to access safeguarding information quickly and efficiently whenever necessary. Records over time indicate that leaders respond seriously and appropriately to any concerns raised about pupils' safety. The local authority's recent review of safeguarding policies and procedures in the school confirms that leaders take all steps necessary to ensure pupils' safety.
- The school's effective work with agencies helps to ensure that pupils are safe and feel secure, including those pupils who are vulnerable. The school's increasing success in supporting vulnerable pupils in school is reflected in a reduction in exclusions in the past two years.
- Leaders expect all pupils, regardless of background or ability, to attend regularly, so that they can achieve well. They keep a careful watch on pupils' attendance throughout the year, following up on poor or unexplained absence rigorously.
- The headteacher, education welfare officer, special educational needs leader and inclusion team provide caring, positive and effective support for individual pupils and their families. They work very successfully with agencies, such as medical specialists, to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Leaders have secured significant improvements in individual pupils' attendance as a result, including for disadvantaged pupils and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are determined to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and continue to work with parents to ensure that this is the case.
- Leaders and teachers know pupils very well and have a thorough understanding of their needs. They use the pupil premium funding effectively to provide high-quality support for disadvantaged pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- The teaching of writing during key stage 1 has improved substantially during the past year. Teachers have made good use of training to improve the teaching of writing skills. They plan activities carefully to appeal to a wide range of interests and use activities well to build specific writing skills. Pupils' books are brimming with good-quality and carefully presented written work. All groups of pupils make

good progress during key stage 1, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able. Improvements in teaching mean that standards are rising.

- Leaders acted quickly to reverse a dip in the Year 1 phonics check in 2016. They analysed results of the check and identified weaker areas in pupils' phonics knowledge. Leaders have strengthened teaching to ensure that these aspects are taught more thoroughly and securely. As a result, pupils are securely equipped with some of the key reading and writing skills needed to achieve well in English. More pupils are on track to achieve well than previously. Carefully focused teaching for Year 2 pupils who did less well in the Year 1 phonics check has ensured that they make the rapid progress needed to catch up with their learning.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching deepens and extends pupils' mathematical understanding more effectively
- pupils' behaviour during the lunchtime break is the same high quality as their behaviour during lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

You and I visited all classes during the inspection. We also visited specialist reading and numeracy lessons and the nurture group. I looked at pupils' work during these observations, talked with pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. I also looked separately at a sample of pupils' books with your English and mathematics leaders. I spoke with pupils during my visits to the classrooms and during the lunchtime break.

I met with you and your deputy headteacher during the inspection. I also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a local authority representative. I took account of 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. I considered 38 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 22

responses to the pupil questionnaire.

I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan and local authority reports. I also looked at documents about safeguarding and attendance.