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Mrs Amanda Turner  
Headteacher  
Shinfield Infant and Nursery School  
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Dear Mrs Turner

### **Short inspection of Shinfield Infant and Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 January 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 the school was judged to be good in February 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since then, the school has grown to become a three-form-entry infant school and a new deputy headteacher has taken up post. You ensure that your staff team work in line with your vision. They look for the strengths in each child, so that 'everyone is shining in their own field'. Leaders ensure that the school ethos is inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive bespoke and skilful support. As a result, they make good progress. Leaders have a clear and accurate view of what the school does well and what could be even better.

The previous inspection highlighted many strengths of the school, including behaviour and parental involvement. These continue to be strengths. Pupils have a very good understanding of the newly introduced behaviour policy, with the three new rules, 'Be ready, be safe, be respectful.' They say that behaviour is good at Shinfield. Infants and that other children are kind. My classroom visits confirmed their views. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend Shinfield Infants. As one parent wrote, summing up the views of many, 'My daughter is so happy at this school. The teachers and staff are brilliant, approachable and always willing to help.'

Pupils love their school, especially the school guinea pigs, Tom and Jerry, for whom they learn to care. They also enjoy performing to their parents, and using the

climbing equipment and scooters at playtimes. They told me that their teachers are kind and funny, and that their teachers always help them. The school is an integral part of Shinfield community life. For example, every child in the school attended a remembrance service with residents on the school green. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils become caring and responsible citizens of the future.

The previous inspection report asked leaders to improve the progress that children make in the Nursery. Your actions to address this have been very successful. Children enjoy participating in a range of well-planned activities that follow their interests and promote their early reading, writing and mathematical skills well. They are active and independent learners. Leaders were also asked to improve standards in writing. You have been partly successful here, especially with the pupils' spelling and the application of phonics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You liaise well with external agencies so that the needs of pupils and their families are addressed effectively. Pre-employment checks are carried out stringently. A detailed recruitment checklist helps to ensure that you have all relevant information about new staff and volunteers. Safeguarding training is regular and well planned. Leaders check the effectiveness of this training through regular refreshers and reviews. As a result, keeping children safe is seen as everyone's responsibility as part of a strong safeguarding culture.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know to whom to speak if they have any worries. They told me, 'Grown-ups always listen to us.' Pupils learn about keeping themselves safe in a wide range of situations, including online, through healthy eating and in dealing with fire. 'The Great Fire of Shinfield' is a popular event on the school calendar, following on from pupils learning about The Great Fire of London in history. Parents, too, think that their children are safe. As one parent wrote, 'My child is safe, looked after and encouraged to be the best they can be.'

### **Inspection findings**

- Mark-making and early writing skills are well developed in the Nursery and Reception. Children make strong progress in the early years. Leaders are effectively focused on improving attainment and progress in writing in key stage 1. In 2018, Year 2 pupils' attainment in writing was lower than that of other pupils nationally. You are aware that due to some underachievement in the past, pupils have not made the progress in writing of which they are capable. This includes some pupils currently in Year 2. You and other leaders have taken action to address this. Pupils enjoy writing and are very clear on how to improve their work. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, pupils were writing a description of their bicycles. They took great care to include adjectives in their writing, as they knew this would make their writing better. Spelling is secure and current pupils are making good progress in writing creatively. Teachers ensure that pupils have many opportunities to plan what they are going to write through role play and storytelling. This has resulted in pupils using ambitious vocabulary. However,

pupils' punctuation, structuring of sentences and handwriting are not yet of a consistently high standard.

- In 2018, too few pupils attained the expected standard for their age in mathematics by the end of Year 2. Pupils have a good understanding of number and place value because of the effective use of practical apparatus to support their learning. Teachers model the use of mathematical language well, and as a result, pupils, including the youngest children in the school, use mathematical words with confidence. However, sometimes pupils are not challenged highly enough through substantial opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. As a result, pupils do not routinely deepen their learning to make really excellent progress.
- The curriculum at Shinfield Infants is broad and balanced. Leaders plan the curriculum to provide pupils with a wide range of rich and engaging learning experiences, with many opportunities for outdoor learning. The teaching of history is a particular strength, using the many artefacts that the school has about its 300-year-old history, including a Victorian washroom. Leaders ensure that every occasion is taken to learn about local history. For example, pupils have recently learned about soldiers from the local parish who gave their lives during the First World War. Sometimes, pupils' learning across the wider curriculum is less than it should be because some activities and tasks are not challenging enough. Where this is the case, tasks do not deepen pupils' thinking or encourage them to apply subject-specific skills extensively enough, particularly, but not solely, for the most able pupils. Raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve across the wider curriculum is currently an important focus for leaders.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- punctuation, sentence structure and handwriting are taught consistently well in key stage 1
- teaching challenges pupils highly in mathematics, through better opportunities for reasoning and problem-solving, so that more pupils make really strong progress by the end of key stage 1
- teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in subjects other than English and mathematics are consistently high.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the school's effectiveness. Together, we visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils and look at their work. We looked in depth at the quality of work in a range of pupils' books. I considered 85 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. I also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires were considered and I had a meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school.

I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body and met with a representative from the local authority. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including: the school's self-evaluation; school-improvement planning; information about pupils' progress; and various policies. I also examined the school's website.