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Mr F Murphy
Head of School
Pegasus School
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Oxford
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Dear Mr Murphy

Short inspection of Pegasus School

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 2016, 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 June 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 the school opened in September 2013, coinciding with you becoming head of school, you have demonstrated a purposeful and diligent approach to raising standards. You demonstrate high levels of commitment to the pupils of Pegasus School ensuring they are safe, happy and excited by the rich and appealing curriculum. The school's mission to: 'create a culture which challenges expectations and broadens horizons', threads seamlessly through all aspects of its work. You have successfully established a highly regarded school at the heart of its community. Parents speak highly of the school, particularly the high levels of support that you and your staff provide to all pupils.

Members of the trust value your calm and methodical approach, readily identifying the many strengths in your leadership. Your steadfast, meticulous approach ensures that plans to raise standards further are detailed and precisely targeted to where improvement is needed. Children join Pegasus School with skills and understanding well below those typical for their age. Because of high-quality teaching and helpful levels of support, most make rapid progress. Standards are rising and most children are eager and well prepared for Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good, and often rapid, progress in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave

Pegasus School, many, including disadvantaged pupils, have met the standards expected for their age in these subjects.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors identified some weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing, including pupils' presentation skills. Leaders were also asked to raise the quality of teaching by ensuring that pupils understand the next steps needed to improve their work. Along with other school leaders, including members of the trust, you have ensured that the school has successfully addressed these issues.

- Pupils are making more rapid progress in the acquisition of writing skills. They produce high quality texts, writing for a range of different purposes.
- Standards of presentation are high.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide helpful feedback to pupils and are adept at addressing pupils' errors or misunderstandings. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- The curriculum is constructed thoughtfully and activities very effectively inspire pupils to learn well and try their best.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and procedures are rigorous. All staff play their part, embracing the systematic training opportunities on offer. In addition to statutory training, all staff, including catering and administrative staff, receive a thorough grounding in the school's relationships policy. As a result, adults are vigilant and share your commitment to keeping everyone safe.

Work with a host of outside agencies is comprehensive. Family nurturing programmes are a key feature of the school's provision and support develops pupils' emotional health and well-being effectively. Programmes are extended beyond the school community and are accessed freely by those in need. Parents appreciate the ease with which they can access additional support if the need arises.

Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They understand the importance of regular attendance. Although rates of absence have fallen overall, persistent absence remains high for some vulnerable groups. Although leaders and members of the trust are appropriately keeping an eye on attendance, inroads into reversing this trend are minimal.

Pupils show every confidence in the adults who care for them. Strengths in friendships are highly evident between pupils of all ages at Pegasus School. Pupils are unanimous that bullying is rare. They note that from time to time there are minor disagreements but that these are resolved quickly and to everyone's

satisfaction. Parents concur, noting that staff are readily available and swift to address any concerns. Pupils eagerly declare, 'We all care for one another.'

The curriculum affords plentiful opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet, including how to protect themselves from cyberbullying. They know to report anything that causes concern and that an adult will always help. Work with an actor in residence has resulted in thoughtful discussion, challenging pupils' opinions fittingly. Using elements of the government's 'Prevent' duty as a stimulus for play writing, pupils are developing a mature awareness of equality and diversity issues, building resilience appropriately. They have a spot-on understanding of values such as tolerance and respect, applying these well to their day-to-day undertakings.

Inspection findings

- Leaders pay close attention to evaluating school performance. Your go-getting ambition for the pupils of Pegasus shines through and you are quick to remedy any dips in performance. For example, you have introduced timely improvements to raise standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1. A visiting specialist teacher is supporting staff well and an in-depth training programme is ongoing. This includes some helpful support for teaching assistants, including a focus on developing their skills to support disadvantaged pupils even more effectively. This work is at an early stage.
- Approximately half of the school's population are disadvantaged pupils. Good use is made of additional funding to support these pupils' learning and pastoral needs. In all year groups, a wide range of highly appropriate support is having a positive impact, both academically and pastorally. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils make similar rates of progress to their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's engaging and vibrant curriculum is a real strength. Residential visits in Key Stage 2 hold high appeal to pupils as for many this is the first time they have experienced life beyond their locality. Pupils talked animatedly to the inspector about a forthcoming visit to Snowdonia. They were a delight to observe as they questioned what it would be like and how it might compare to their local area. Pupils' first-hand experiences are extended well beyond the school gate and they bubble with enthusiasm about the prospects that lie ahead.
- Central to your ambition is that all pupils learn to read well. You have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils read often, wisely utilising various avenues of additional help such as that of the army of trained volunteers who visit to hear readers regularly.

- Pupils' understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) develops rapidly from the word go. Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes, confidently recognising tricky words and exploring a wide range of vocabulary. This good start is developed in Year 1 where pupils concentrate hard and respond well to highly effective teaching. Pupils recognise that making 'marvellous mistakes' contributes well to embedding skills and accelerating their learning journey. As a result, pupils' early reading skills are developing well.
- Pupils are becoming confident at developing their calculation skills in mathematics. They revel in opportunities to use a range of practical apparatus to solve calculations. You have rightly identified that there is room to accelerate progress further so more pupils achieve the standards expected for their age at Key Stage 1. The introduction of 'mathematics passports' has reinforced what is expected at each pupil's stage of development. Pupils respond well to their targets and enjoy mastering new skills. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils, including those of average ability, to apply their understanding in order to solve problems.
- Writing tasks hold appeal as they are planned carefully to make use of the real-life experiences that the pupils encounter at Pegasus School. For example, pupils in Year 1, after carefully dissecting owl pellets as part of their topic work, then applied their practical experiences to writing a set of instructions. Pupils produce writing of a high standard.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of their individual learning targets and know, in some depth, how to improve their work. This is because they obtain very detailed and helpful feedback from their teachers. As a result, pupils have a strong sense of how well their skills are improving over time and are rightly proud of their efforts. Pupils are keen to assert their views commenting, 'I can write more now as I know how to improve my work.'
- The provision to develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is excellent. The curriculum is steeped in thoughtful opportunities that encourage pupils to reflect on their values and develop high levels of social responsibility. Consequently, the school is highly successful in developing pupils' aspirations and enhancing their readiness for the next stages of their education. Work with IntoUniversity and Oxford University colleges, covering topics such as journalism, enables pupils to re-enact a university graduation ceremony complete with caps and gowns. As a result, pupils are inspired by the possibilities that lie ahead. As members of the trust confidently state, 'There are no ceilings to what can be achieved by Pegasus pupils.'

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and each other. This is a cohesive community where pupils appreciate and celebrate diversity and uniqueness. As one pupil commented, 'Internationally it doesn't matter what country you come from. You're all welcomed just the same.'
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and thrive. Abundant creative opportunities spark pupils' imagination, such as the eye-catching marshmallow igloos in Year 2, constructed as part of their polar explorers topic.
- Attendance for many pupils is good. However, small numbers are persistently absent. Members of the advisory board are beginning to improve attendance and a number of highly successful strategies have been implemented. That said, persistent absence rates are marginally above the national average.
- Parents are tremendously positive about all aspects of the school. All of the parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) would recommend the school to another parent.
- Members of the trust offer helpful support to leaders. They are ambitious for the school's future.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- persistent absence is tackled effectively so that more pupils attend school regularly
- in mathematics, average ability pupils are challenged to apply their knowledge and understanding to solving problems.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Blackbird Academy Trust, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Oxfordshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, pupils and two members of the trust, including the Chair of the Advisory Board. We observed learning in nine lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of 12 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent

View. I observed pupils' behaviour on arrival at the school and during the school day. I spoke with a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. I analysed a range of school documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.