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Ms Jo Oliver
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Oliver

Short inspection of Tillingbourne Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 1 December 2015, 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 September 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since you arrived at the school you have created a shared vision for excellence, underpinned by your desire to create a truly inclusive school. Your highly motivated staff feel well supported because you have involved them fully in key developments and given them the right training to enable them to achieve well. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good and some is outstanding. The exciting curriculum, valued by parents, means children enjoy coming to school.

Your new system to track pupils' achievement is used very effectively by all teachers to check how well pupils are doing on a day to day basis. It also helps teachers plan work at the right level of challenge. One pupil explained to me that teachers 'push you to the limit you can go'. Teachers respond swiftly, with well-targeted support, if pupils need extra help to catch up. As a result, pupils currently in the school make good progress. Gaps are closing for disadvantaged pupils, because you ensure that teachers make them a high priority. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to their peers and teachers, showing a great deal of respect for others. This helps them focus well in lessons. The school's work to become a Rights Respecting School means pupils think carefully about their responsibilities and they treat others kindly. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities to apply for important roles such as house captain or play leader. This helps them develop leadership

skills, and understand concepts such as democracy and fair play. Pupils are very well prepared for secondary school and beyond.

At the time of your last inspection, inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school, including excellent care, guidance and support. They also identified a need to improve achievement in writing and to ensure that all pupils know their targets and understand their next steps in learning. Leaders have addressed these points effectively so that:

- standards in writing have been significantly above the national average for the past three years
- pupils use their target cards successfully to help them remember what to work on
- teachers provide helpful feedback, which pupils use to improve their work.

Notwithstanding this success, you are aiming higher. You analyse information about pupil progress forensically, to identify the right key priorities to help you improve still further. Your well-thought-out school development plan sets clear expectations for specific groups of pupils or subject areas. In particular, you aim to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to help pupils make more rapid progress, especially in writing. You are developing useful partnerships with local schools which are aiding this improvement. As part of this work, you realise more can be done to ensure that classroom displays provide excellent support for learning, as well as celebrating pupils' achievements. You also recognise the need to develop further the work already started to ensure that a minority of disadvantaged pupils attend school more regularly. Your staff understand what is needed to reach your targets for excellence, and they are all fully behind you.

Safeguarding is effective.

Everyone at Tillingbourne makes safety a priority. Pupils justifiably say they feel safe at school and parents rightly agree. Themed weeks on anti-bullying and computer safety teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, including from cyber bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but that if it does occur, 'there are serious consequences, they deal with it well.' Pupils usually play very happily together at playtimes. They are confident that if they cannot sort out any disagreement, an adult is always around to help.

Pupils' safety is high profile and it is regularly discussed at staff meetings and governor meetings. Staff training is up to date, including keeping pupils safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Adults know what action to take if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare, and you promptly involve the right agencies when appropriate. Leaders and governors sensibly use the local authority's annual safeguarding audit to check all arrangements are properly in place. You recently installed more robust fencing, which has further strengthened site security.

Inspection findings

- You are ambitious for each and every pupil in your school because you firmly believe 'they deserve the best'. You have developed a collaborative and supportive ethos across the school. All staff work closely together to achieve your clearly stated aims to improve the school and make it outstanding.
- Most pupils attend regularly because they really enjoy coming to school. This is because the curriculum offers a wide range of stimulating activities, which motivates them to learn. The vast majority of pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their work. They listen carefully and try their best. You have made a good start in addressing the poor attendance of a minority of disadvantaged pupils.
- You accurately identify what the school needs to work on next. All leaders are focused on the same priorities, ensuring that there is a cohesive approach to improvements. Leaders make thorough checks on the school's work and ensure that teachers act on their advice. Teachers appreciate the effective support to improve their teaching, which is helping to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Last year, governors commissioned an external review of their work to ensure that they are as effective as possible. As a result they make regular checks to see how well the school is doing, and ask pertinent and effective questions to focus leaders' thinking and drive improvements.
- You use your developing partnerships with other schools successfully, to confirm judgements about the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work. This is developing teachers' confidence as they get to grips with the new national curriculum.
- Class teachers make good use of the new assessment system to check pupils' progress, acting quickly if any pupil starts to fall behind. Leaders also use it regularly to hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement. This makes it a useful tool for improvement.
- The new marking policy is used consistently well by all teachers. Pupils are given time to respond to their teacher's comments and improve their work, which is helping them make faster progress. Pupils also work determinedly towards their individual targets, and are proud when they achieve their goals.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are consistently well above the national average. The vast majority of pupils make at least the progress they should across subjects, and many do better. There is no evidence that the dip in pupils' progress in reading in 2015 is symptomatic of a decline.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is a key focus for your work. Although published data shows these pupils fell behind in Year 6 in 2015, the school's information about current standards indicates that the gaps are closing. This is backed up by evidence in pupils' books, which shows them making good progress over time. The leader overseeing their

progress is helping to remove barriers to learning. For example, personalised bookmarks motivate some pupils to read more. This emphasis on individuals is helping pupils catch up with where they should be.

- Teachers make sure that pupils know exactly how to tackle their work because they provide clear instructions. They quickly pick up on any misconceptions, developing pupils' confidence and understanding to help them succeed. Teachers work hard to accelerate pupils' progress, especially in writing. For example, they provide stimulating starting points, which encourage pupils to write more. Pupils know that their teachers have high expectations and they strive to make their work of good quality. There are some useful prompts on tables to remind pupils what to include in their work, such as lists of prepositions. However, there is not always enough guidance around classrooms to help pupils check their work or show them what to aim for.
- Standards of behaviour are very high. Pupils are well turned-out, friendly and polite. For example, they routinely hold doors open for others to pass through. They are interested in learning and strive to succeed. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn to express their views, such as through school and class councils, or the Rights Respecting School council. All in all, pupils exemplify your vision for the school, as they are indeed, 'Happy, Curious and Confident'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of outstanding teaching increases so that more pupils make accelerated progress, particularly in writing
- there is more helpful guidance in classrooms to support pupils to improve their work
- efforts to improve the attendance of a small number of disadvantaged pupils persist, to bring it in line with that of other 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 Surrey County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Gard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other leaders, teachers, pupils, three governors and a representative of Surrey Local Authority. We visited sections of six lessons and scrutinised a range of pupils' work. I took account of 32 responses to the staff survey, 25 responses to the pupil survey and 71 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, I considered 67 responses by free text or email. I observed pupils' behaviour at break, around the school and in lessons. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, records of leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.