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Mrs Celia Dawson  
Headteacher  
Cricket Green School  
Lower Green West  
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Dear Mrs Dawson

### **Short inspection of Cricket Green School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 2017 with Jan Keating, Ofsted Inspector, 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 outstanding in February 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your senior team have been highly successful in developing a culture that ensures that pupils and their families, staff and governors, are fully included in school life. Your leadership is inspirational. You encourage staff to be creative and innovative, allowing them the freedom to develop projects within their areas of interest to improve pupils' outcomes.

The enthusiasm of the staff impacts positively on the pupils, who respond by being keen and eager to learn. You, your staff and governors are wholly committed to ensuring that pupils achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils, both in their academic studies and in their personal development.

Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is broad, creative, functional and encourages them to develop skills for employment. Their behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils are happy, respond well to staff instructions and show high levels of engagement with their learning. They show their enthusiasm by readily answering questions in lessons and proudly showing their work. They say that 'teachers are really patient and encouraging' and 'they are determined to help you'.

Parents and carers are very positive about their experiences of the school. They appreciate all that the staff do for their children and also for the support that is provided for families. Parents said 'my child loves Cricket Green School and it is delightful to see the joy that attending the school brings' and 'Cricket Green is a wonderful school'.

The governing body are very effective and highly supportive of the school. They recognise the impact of your inspirational leadership in empowering and supporting staff at all levels to develop their practice. Governors have an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and next steps for development. While they effectively hold leaders to account for the performance of the school, governors have not ensured that the pupil premium strategy meets requirements.

The school has many links with other schools and community groups. You lead a cooperative of local schools and community partners and are a national leader of education supporting other schools. You also jointly lead the local special school teaching alliance. In addition, the school runs an outreach service, on behalf of the local authority, to support mainstream schools in developing their provision for pupils with autism. You and your team have a far-reaching impact on improving other schools beyond your own.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding has a high profile within the school with you as the designated safeguarding lead. All staff have up-to-date training, including online safety and the 'Prevent' duty. They understand what to do if they have a cause of concern about a pupil. All senior staff and some governors have completed safer recruitment training. Robust pre-employment checks are carried out to make certain that staff are suitable to work with children. Confidential records and files relating to individual pupils are well kept. Parents and carers say that their child is safe in school. Pupils are able to name members of staff that they would talk to if they had any concerns. They give examples of how they have learned to keep themselves safe through lessons on stranger-danger and online safety. Attendance is very well monitored and swift action taken where absence causes concern.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed to look at how teaching had developed since the last inspection to maintain the judgement of outstanding and improve outcomes for pupils. We visited a range of classrooms across the school with senior leaders.
- Teaching and learning remain outstanding throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and have accurately identified any gaps in their learning. Teachers are very creative in planning interesting activities that engage pupils well in their learning. This has ensured that pupils make consistently substantial progress. For example, in science, pupils were learning about renewable and non-renewable energy. They confidently answered demanding questions demonstrating their increasing knowledge and understanding of energy sources.

- We also agreed to look at the assessment of pupils' progress. The school's information shows that pupils consistently make very strong progress. There are no differences in the progress made between different groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Senior leaders are currently taking steps to strengthen and refine assessment practice still further. There are ambitious plans to continue to work with other special schools in this area.
- Finally, we agreed to look at how well the school prepares pupils for the next stage in their education, training and employment. You have recently reviewed the sixth-form curriculum, looking closely at how well it equips students for their future employment and independent living. You are proud to have led on the development of the work-based programme, Project Search, designed to prepare pupils for employment.
- During the inspection, pupils were successfully using the internet to find suitable outfits for a chosen job. They used a journey planner to work out how to get to the workplace and how much they could spend on buying their lunch. Also, sixth-form students were running the school café and practising many workplace skills. These included taking orders from the menu, preparing and serving refreshments and operating the till. Pupils in the school council said, 'Teachers make us work hard because they want us to get good jobs.' They also reported that 'it's important to learn how to cook because when you grow up your mum and dad won't always be there and you will have to take care of your family'. Parents interviewed during the inspection stated that the school prepared their children exceptionally well for adult life.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the outstanding provision continues to be maintained, given the ambitious planned expansion of the school
- opportunities continue to be developed for other schools to learn from the school's excellent practice
- the assessment system is refined still further
- the school's published pupil premium strategy fully meets requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Tarrant  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

The inspection team met with you, your senior leaders, family support worker, teachers and teaching assistants. We met with the school office manager to review the school's single central record and recruitment procedures. We met with members of the governing body, including the chair, deputy, staff and parent governors. We also spoke to the school's improvement partner by telephone. We visited classrooms accompanied by senior leaders to collect a range of evidence relating to teaching, learning and assessment. We met with the school council to talk about their experience of school and aspects of safeguarding. We also met with a group of parents to gather their views on a range of matters, including safeguarding and the progress of their children. We scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, pupil files and folders. We took account of the 18 responses to Parent View and 37 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.