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Mrs Hilary Salter
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Salter

Short inspection of Horley Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2018, 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, other senior leaders and governors all know the school well and have pursued high aspirations to help all pupils achieve their potential. Staff enjoy working at the school and are proud to be part of a successful team. Collectively, you have the trust of parents, carers and the wider community to lead the school forward.

The strengths recognised at the previous inspection included strong leadership and the good quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The early years, pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the partnership with parents were also described as strengths. Inspectors identified the need to ensure that assessment information is used to plan work at the right standard and the most able pupils are challenged consistently. Leaders have reviewed how assessment information is managed. Staff know pupils very well, and, as a result, most work is matched closely to pupils' abilities. As a consequence of greater challenge in reading, writing and mathematics, the most able pupils now attain higher standards than in other schools nationally. However, some of the most able disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as their classmates in writing and mathematics.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have continued the process of development planning and self-evaluation, to highlight priorities and help make the school even better. For example, you have recognised accurately the need to focus on accelerating progress in phonics and improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. Governors routinely ask searching questions and spend time in school. They monitor

the plan's progress carefully. Consequently, the school is constantly improving and staffing and resources are targeted effectively to raise standards.

Leaders have created a rich curriculum, with close links to the local community. Pupils take part in local events such as Horley in Bloom and the Horley Carnival. During our visits to classrooms, we saw examples of enthusiastic teaching motivating pupils to take part in a wide range of exciting tasks. Pupils enjoy making biscuits to sell to their parents after school, writing about dinosaurs, solving number puzzles and undertaking outdoor activities such as 'forest school'. Staff question pupils skilfully to help them think more deeply about their work and to learn quickly. Pupils like working together and talking about what they are learning. As a result of good teaching, most pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, as we agreed, too few of the most able disadvantaged pupils attain high standards in writing and mathematics.

Pupils are known as individuals and supported successfully to take part in school activities. The whole staff team works closely together to make sure that each pupil gets the support that they need. Pupils are cared for well. As a result, they settle into school quickly. Pupils behave well and are happy at school. One parent commented: 'My children bounce into school.'

Pupils are polite, holding doors open and greeting visitors confidently. Pupils are keen to talk about their school and speak enthusiastically and happily. They appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. These include cookery club, gardening, cricket and football, all of which promote a healthy lifestyle and support pupils' progress in a range of subjects.

Safeguarding is effective.

- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are trained at the right level to match their roles. They keep detailed, up-to-date records. As necessary, leaders work with outside agencies to provide effective support for pupils and families. Staff know how to keep pupils safe and what to do if they have a concern.
- The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe. For example, pupils know how to use the road safely and 'how to stay safe online' leaders monitor the use of the internet in school rigorously. Pupils are confident they can talk to staff if they have any concerns and know that action will be taken. The school has been awarded a silver anti-bullying charter mark, and incidents of bullying and racism are rare. As a result, pupils are safe and feel safe.
- Parents find school staff very approachable and are happy to ask questions and raise any issues. Parents know that effective action will follow. Leaders provide before-school and after-school clubs to extend learning beyond the school day and to meet the changing needs of families. This is appreciated by parents. All staff and parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaires are confident that pupils are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on how effectively school leaders are raising standards in phonics at key stage 1 and the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils in writing and mathematics. We also agreed to look at how successfully leaders are improving pupils' attendance and addressing persistent absence.
- Leaders monitor tracking information thoroughly and have accurately identified progress in phonics as a point for action. Pupils enjoy a wide range of phonics activities and talk enthusiastically about their work. They like playing games and searching around the classroom for given sounds. Staff are knowledgeable about phonics and question the pupils in careful steps to help them move their learning forward. Staff help pupils to use phonics knowledge in their writing and are increasingly effective. There are extra resources in the classroom and pupils get additional help in small groups. Pupils' progress in phonics is accelerating and they are beginning to attain standards similar to those in other schools. However, as we discussed, too few pupils are attaining the required standards in phonics or are routinely using phonics knowledge in their writing.
- Leaders use extra funding for disadvantaged pupils with increasing success. For example, providing resources to help disadvantaged pupils take part in extra-curricular activities. Staff track pupils closely and provide additional targeted support in both mathematics and writing to help pupils catch up. Extra adults work effectively with pupils in class and with groups. They ask questions and work through examples. Pupils enjoy the challenge of problem-solving and reasoning activities in mathematics. In writing, pupils are given increasing opportunities to talk about their work and practise the skills needed. Consequently, many disadvantaged pupils are now attaining higher standards than previously. However, as we agreed, additional work is needed to ensure that more of the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve their potential in mathematics and writing, as some changes have taken place recently.
- In 2017, pupils' attendance declined, with overall attendance slightly below average, and levels of persistent absence above average. Leaders monitor pupils with low rates of attendance closely, working with external agencies as needed. Leaders consider requests for leave from school very carefully. Pupils appreciate rewards for attending school and know that it is important to come to school to learn. Pupils and their families are given support as necessary, for example with the provision of before-school and after-school care. Leaders take effective steps to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils with low attendance. As a result, pupils' overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages, with effective action taken to support persistent absentees.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able disadvantaged pupils are enabled to achieve high standards in writing and mathematics.
- all pupils are challenged consistently to achieve at least the required standard in phonics.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Addison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and senior leaders and the chair of the governing body accompanied by two other governors. I spoke on the telephone to the vice-chair of governors and to a representative of the local authority. I also met a group of pupils from Years 1 and 2. Senior staff accompanied me on visits to all classrooms, where I observed learning, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. A range of mathematics and writing books were reviewed with the deputy headteacher and middle leaders. I observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school. I took account of 112 parental responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and reviewed 112 written comments, along with one letter from a parent. I also considered 51 responses to the staff questionnaires. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information on the school's website, safety records, minutes of meetings, various policies and information about pupils' progress.