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Ms Kristina Stewart
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Stewart

Short inspection of Orchard Way Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 May 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 have provided strong leadership since being appointed in January 2017. You set high expectations and hold all staff to account for their work. You have made changes to the leadership team. Middle leaders are becoming increasingly skilled in supporting staff to improve their practice, particularly in the teaching of English. As a consequence, after a decline in pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, pupils' progress is now improving.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection. Leaders have provided staff with effective training in the teaching of writing and in raising the achievement of the most able pupils.

Members of the governing body have audited and refined their skills to enable them to carry out their roles effectively. They challenge and support school leaders well. Governors take time to visit the school to check whether the actions set out in the school improvement plan are being implemented. Regular training enables governors to keep up to date with the information that they need. As a result, governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

Pupils who spoke to me said that they enjoy school and appreciate all the opportunities that they have to participate in a wide range of clubs, including sewing, art and dance. Pupils are polite and well mannered. In lessons, pupils are

keen to do their best and to achieve well. Around school, pupils are well behaved. Pupils told me that they feel safe and that you deal effectively with the rare incidents of bullying.

Parents, staff and pupils who completed Ofsted questionnaires are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent's comment reflected the views of many: 'Pastoral care in school is excellent. Teachers know all the pupils across year groups and make them feel welcome.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The arrangements for checking that staff are suitable people to work with children meet requirements. Staff receive appropriate training about potential risks to the safety of pupils. As a result, they understand the actions that they should take if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare.

The majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are happy to come to school and feel safe. Pupils said that they are taught how to stay safe, including when using the internet. They are confident about seeking help if they have any worries. They trust their teachers and know that they can speak to them about any concerns that they may have.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on three key lines of enquiry. The first of these related to pupils' achievement in key stage 2. This was because, in 2017, pupils' achievement at the end of Year 6 showed a decline from the previous year, with pupils making broadly average progress in English and mathematics.
- Following the identification of the need to improve pupils' progress in reading, you provided training for staff to strengthen their understanding of teaching reading comprehension skills. Furthermore, you enhanced reading by improving the school library as well as individual class libraries. As a result, pupils read from a wide range of interesting and challenging books. The pupils who read to me said how much they enjoy reading and spoke at length about their favourite authors. The good quality of writing observed in pupils' books shows that they are given many opportunities to explore different styles of writing and write for a wide variety of purposes. Pupils also practise spelling, grammar and punctuation skills in a range of other subjects. In mathematics, teachers focus on fluency in basic number and calculation skills and give pupils opportunities to apply these through problem-solving activities. This means that the majority of pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' skills in English and mathematics are also developed across the wider curriculum. Topics are planned to capture pupils' interests and engage them further in their learning. As a result, pupils make meaningful connections between subjects. However, as you agreed, the assessment of pupils' progress across the wider curriculum is at an early stage of development.

- Secondly, we focused on the achievement of the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because a below-average proportion of pupils attained the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2017.
- You had recognised this as an area for improvement and were quick to take action this year. You have provided staff with training on how to stretch and challenge the most able pupils within lessons. The impact of your actions is seen most evidently in English. The most able pupils are now making sustained progress in both reading and writing. They write with increasing confidence and use sophisticated vocabulary to adapt their writing to the intended audience. Teachers are better equipped to develop the most able pupils' reading skills. Pupils have a wide choice of complex texts and read widely and enthusiastically.
- In mathematics, however, the work set for the most able pupils does not demand enough of them. Too often, these pupils do not have enough time to apply their mathematics knowledge to develop reasoning skills. Consequently, this slows their progress.
- The third focus of this inspection related to some pupils who are persistently absent, including some who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- You have worked hard to address this issue by implementing a wide range of actions. Leaders rigorously track absences, and they respond on the same day if a child is absent from school. You also encourage pupils to attend through rewards and incentives. Analysis of attendance data from this year shows that persistent absence is improving, including for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they accurately assess the progress of pupils in subjects across the curriculum
- teachers provide the most able pupils with more opportunities to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Jenell Chetty
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of middle leaders. I also spoke to two governors and a representative from the local authority. I met with eight pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 and spoke informally with other pupils during lessons and at playtime. I visited classes with you, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils reading in Years 3, 4 and 6.

I carried out a more detailed scrutiny of some pupils' work with you and the deputy headteacher. I checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements. I looked at the survey results from pupils, staff and parents and considered the free-text comments that had been placed on Parent View. I considered the accuracy of your self-evaluation and looked at a range of other documentation, including information on pupils' achievement, the school development plan and external reports.