

Serco Inspections
Colmore Plaza
20 Colmore Circus Queensway
Birmingham
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T: 0121 679 9158
Direct E: rachel.dayan@serco.com



14 May 2015

Mrs Hayley Dyer
Headteacher
Crays Hill Primary School
London Road
Crays Hill
Billericay
CM11 2UZ

Dear Mrs Dyer

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Crays Hill Primary School

Following my visit to your school 13 May 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and the time you took to discuss behaviour in your school.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with the no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about attendance at the school.

Evidence

I considered evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day
- documentary evidence
- discussions with school leaders, staff and pupils.

Having evaluated all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

Context

Crays Hill is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Since the last inspection, four teachers have left the school and three new teachers have been appointed. Pupils are now taught in three mixed-aged classes. Almost all pupils come from Irish Traveller backgrounds. All pupils speak English as their first language and around three quarters are eligible for the pupil premium, which

provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This is much higher than the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, supported through school action, is well above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning needs. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also well above average. Nearly half of the pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times. The school's previous inspection, in April 2013, judged behaviour to be good but made reference to the fact that attendance was below average and that there were too many pupils who were regularly absent.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' attendance remains significantly below the national average. School leaders have made a concerted effort to reduce absence but have not yet been able to convince all parents of the importance of regular school attendance. A more rigorous approach to following up absence, and reminding parents of the importance of regular attendance, has led to significant improvements, but too many parents continue to take pupils out of school for prolonged periods during term time. This has a major impact on pupils' achievement and many are significantly below where they should be in the development of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons but, on too many occasions, poor behaviour from a very small minority of pupils interrupts learning. During this inspection, challenging behaviour was seen in some lessons; this included pupils refusing to co-operate with adults who were teaching them. The school's own records also indicate that disruptive behaviour is too common at the school, and that this has often led to pupils being excluded for short periods of time.

Pupils generally get on very well together and there is a strong sense of community at the school. Pupils are proud of their school. They wear their uniform with pride and look after the school site well; for example they take care not to drop litter. During this inspection almost all of the pupils were courteous and friendly towards the adults who teach them and towards each other. Records of pupils' behaviour indicate that this is typical. Pupils said that they love their school and feel safe when they are there. They said that bullying was not allowed and did not happen. This is reflected in the school's records of behaviour.

During the school day, pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly. Adults model good behaviour and pupils treat adults, and each other, with respect. The vast majority of pupils are transported to and from school by taxi. Before and after school, pupils behave well in the school hall, enjoying each other's company while they wait for their classmates to arrive or for their turn to leave. Behaviour in the dining room is well-ordered and calm. There is appropriate, low key, supervision by staff at all times. The behaviour seen outside, during breaks and lunchtimes, was sometimes boisterous but always good natured.

Priorities for further improvement

- Further improve attendance so that it is much closer to the national average.
- Reduce fixed-term exclusions.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Essex, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and Ofsted's Regional Director for the East of England. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow
Her Majesty's Inspector