

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



1 March 2016

Ms Alison Downing
Headteacher
Warren Mead Infant School
Partridge Mead
Banstead
Surrey
SM7 1LS

Dear Ms Downing

Short inspection of Warren Mead Infant School

Following my visit to the school on Wednesday 10 February 2016, 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

At the time of the last inspection, the inspector recognised many strong qualities of the school. These included several aspects judged to be outstanding, such as care, guidance and support, partnerships with external agencies and parents, aspects of pupils' personal development and community cohesion. These continue to be strengths. Pupils achieve well and, by the time they leave, their reading, writing and mathematics skills are well above average. This has been achieved over many years and indeed standards continue to rise. You have established clear systems and high expectations for teaching and learning underpinned by strong, positive values. Parents wholeheartedly agree and believe that their children are enjoying a high-quality, well-rounded education. There is a positive and purposeful learning buzz around the school.

The fact that these outcomes have been maintained and, in some cases, strengthened is testament to your clarity of purpose and the shared ambition of leaders, governors and staff to ensure every child achieves as well as possible with a healthy balance between academic, personal, social and emotional development. It is additionally praiseworthy that you have maintained these strengths despite changes in staffing, including unavoidable, long-term temporary positions. There is some excellent teaching practice, promoting high-quality learning and making sure pupils make rapid progress in each lesson. You and the other leaders provide clear direction and support to enable all staff to achieve the same high standards of

working. However, although all staff are very much signed up to the Warren Mead Infant way of working, not all are, or have been in the past, as consistently good as the very best.

The last inspector highlighted several issues as areas for improvement. These were: raising boys' attainment in literacy, giving pupils more varied learning activities to keep them better focused on their learning and improving the teachers' marking in different subjects. You have addressed these effectively. We saw many opportunities throughout the school for pupils to work on their own, in small groups and one-to-one with an adult. The pace of learning was generally brisk and pupils were keen to do well. Just occasionally there did not seem to be a lot in the books to account for the amount of time spent on the lessons. Teachers' marking in the pupils' books is valuable across all subjects now and the pupils routinely respond to the teachers' guidance, questions and extra challenges. Sometimes, their handwriting and presentation is not as good as it could be and this is most noticeable in the responses to marking.

Planning and the curriculum have been amended to capture boys' interest and involvement. Boys play a full part in discussions, and can explain their ideas and their thinking. As a result, their literacy skills have improved and are as good as the girls by the time they leave for junior school. You are keenly aware that there are gaps between the youngest boys' and girls' reading and writing skills and the boys' willingness to have a go at writing. Your early years team have taken account of this and have successfully adapted their approach to inspire the children, including the boys.

Safeguarding is effective.

You make sure that keeping children safe is the school's top priority. It is on the agenda of every staff briefing and governors' meeting. There are very comprehensive policies and rigorous procedures to keep pupils safe. You check the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children. You brief new staff and volunteers so that they have an immediate understanding of their responsibilities and procedures to follow. All staff are well trained and the Chair of Governors regularly keeps the other governors up to date on safeguarding issues. Guidance, such as on internet safety and preventing extremism, is appropriately interpreted for the infant age group with an emphasis on helping pupils to develop confidence, self-reliance and the confidence to speak up if they have any concerns. You, and the Vice-Chair of Governors, carry out regular health and safety checks. Staff check the safety of the outdoor learning equipment each morning and pupils are taught how to play safely. You have a belt and braces approach to risk assessments of visits and ask colleagues in the local authority to check and make sure your assessments are appropriate. You have introduced useful, practical systems such as flagging up particular pupils on class registers to make sure that teachers are alert and inform you or the deputy headteacher immediately if the child is absent or there is any other cause for concern. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire

Parent View said that their children are safe, happy and well looked after in school. They also agreed that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' school self-evaluation is rigorous, insightful and closely linked to improvement planning. There is a culture of continuous improvement and this is evident in the outcomes for pupils which have remained high over many years. Although there are some small gaps between the achievements of different groups, all pupils achieve well and gaps are reducing.
- You have maintained high outcomes, despite staff changes, and this is due, in part, to the deployment of a highly trained and capable support team. You have also established systems whereby your teaching staff plan together and this enables them to share common routines, strengths and expertise.
- The strong emphasis on values such as care and respect is very evident throughout the school. Pupils behave well and cooperate with each other in and out of lessons. For example, children in Reception enjoyed reading books together and took on different roles in the Chinese restaurant.
- Relationships are warm throughout the day. Breakfast club, playtimes and lunchtimes are calm and happy. The pupils say that people are friendly and they enjoy the opportunities to help each other and help the school to run smoothly.
- There are many visual reminders about behaviour and good attitudes. There are also many photographs of pupils sharing special times together. Pupils appreciate the various rewards systems, including sitting at the special table at lunchtime and winning golden tickets.
- Leaders and governors are outward-looking and keen to seek advice and to share ideas and expertise with others. Everyone I spoke to was enthusiastic about the opportunities provided by close working relationships with two other schools. Although the partnership is relatively recent, you can already point to aspects where collaboration is reaping rewards. For example, teachers are gaining confidence in their judgements as a result of working with colleagues in the other schools.
- Governors have a useful long-term strategic plan and act effectively to bring about improvements. For example, they have promoted the productive links with other schools, recruited governors with additional skills and talents and they have enabled you to strengthen the roles, responsibilities and skills of middle leaders.
- There are very effective arrangements to support pupils and parents into Reception, between classes and on to junior school. There is effective cooperation between early years staff and many pre-school providers along with careful arrangements to make sure children have every chance to settle quickly, and they do. There are also effective arrangements with the junior school on the same site, including joint checking of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills at the end of Year 2. Pupils are well prepared to move confidently onwards.
- The partnership with parents is strong and there are many events and activities which involve parents in school life. Parents responded overwhelmingly positively

to all the online Parent View questions. Many parents also wrote complimentary comments when completing the survey, mentioning the clear direction, high quality of care and the strong relationships between home and school.

- You have thoroughly reviewed the coverage of all the different subjects in line with the most recent requirements. There is a strong focus on providing learning which covers the skills and knowledge required but which also interests and engages the pupils. Pupils are able to talk about their learning heroes, such as Brave Bear, Persevering Penguin or Resourceful Rhino, and say that they are like these characters especially when they try something new or a bit difficult.
- Each main topic starts with exciting activities to ignite pupils' curiosity. Last term's topic books show a wide range of interesting learning across different subjects. There are lovely examples of pupils' art and design around the school, including some wonderful model castles. Pupils enjoy lots of physical education activities, including swimming. Pupils joined in the finale of their music session with gusto and others who were about to have their turn listened appreciatively.
- The use of 'inspire, create, share' in Reception is working well. The adults excite the children about learning through story, drama and art. Children were enthusiastic about the Chinese New Year topic. They made models and pictures and were preparing to share their learning either by speaking or in writing. One boy had already written a sentence during the create part of this activity.
- There is some lovely writing on display around the school, inspired by stories such as *The Princess and the Frog*, and there are good examples in the books of where pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas further, for example to think of more interesting adjectives or suggest different endings to stories. The pupils' books show that they are developing confident writing skills. They are making good progress in writing for different purposes and in different subjects. For example, there are good examples of recording and explaining their findings in science. However, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation varies and often their responses to the teachers' questions are rather untidy.
- You are embedding new systems for assessing pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. Staff are becoming more confident in using the new systems and check how well the pupils are doing regularly. You identify any pupils who need a little extra support or more challenge and take action to make sure all of them make at least expected and often better progress. For example, a group of more-able girls did not make rapid, accelerated progress in mathematics last year. You have looked carefully to identify the reasons for this and are taking steps to make sure girls make rapid progress this year. In most lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils, including girls, to discuss and explain their thinking. In one lesson, we saw a good example of this when a teaching assistant and a group of girls made a video recording to demonstrate how to solve a problem using a number line.
- Teachers make good use of practical resources to help pupils understand mathematics ideas and build skills. They introduce appropriate vocabulary which is then used by the pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils described number sentences using different terms for subtraction. Occasionally some pupils found

the work too easy or too hard and some did not have sufficient opportunity to do enough work. However, most of the pupils' books show a good range of mathematics skills and many pupils are making good progress.

- You believe, rightly, that the quality of support provided by teaching assistants is a strength of the school. Support staff work very effectively throughout the school with individuals and small groups. They work sensitively and unobtrusively, allowing pupils time to think and to talk about their learning. They model good learning and behaviour and have fun at the same time, for example using a musical instrument to accompany impromptu dancing on the outdoor stage area. The specific small-group and individual afternoon activities are well targeted to pupils' needs. The positive impact is evident in the outcomes for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should:

- ensure that pupils take care to present their work neatly
- strengthen the quality and consistency of teaching, assessment and learning so that more of it is as good as the exceptionally high quality which already exists in the school.

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

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, two other senior leaders, two members of the governing body and I had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority. You and I visited most of the teaching groups during the day to observe the quality of teaching and learning, and I had lunch with the children. I looked at a sample of writing, mathematics and topic books. I took account of 62 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and the school's most recent parent survey and spoke to parents at the start of the school day. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about teaching, children's achievement, safeguarding checks, policies, and procedures. I also looked at, and discussed with you, the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the current improvement plans.