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7 March 2016

Mrs Mairi Simpson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Simpson

Short inspection of Clare Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 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.

Clare Community Primary School has successfully grown in numbers whilst retaining its strong family atmosphere. This is reflected in the school's welcoming and inclusive ethos and in the determination that you, your senior leaders and governors share to ensure that each and every pupil in this 'family' is successful. At the same time, the school is outward looking. It has established good links with schools locally and beyond, including with a teaching school, to further develop its practices. Leaders and governors are very aware of national changes in relation to schools and think carefully about the best options for the school's future successful development.

Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have continued to improve many aspects of the school and have successfully addressed issues identified in the last inspection. The deputy headteacher has ensured that pupils' progress is closely measured, and that teachers use their assessments of what pupils can do to plan lessons which move pupils' learning on further. This enables pupils to make good progress. Attendance at the school is now good for the vast majority of pupils because the school has rigorously followed up non-attendance and has put in place a range of positive incentives for good attendance, such as the 'attendance puppy'.

Staff changes have provided challenges in maintaining consistently high standards. You have recognised that more needs to be done to ensure that the best teaching and learning evident in some classes, particularly Years 2 and 6, are replicated throughout the school. You have implemented plans to address this.

Since your appointment in September 2015, you have demonstrated strong leadership and have very rapidly established a cohesive and determined leadership team. Leaders share a common commitment to raising standards further and your complementary skills create a strong and effective team. You are working very effectively together to build on the school's existing successes and have quickly and accurately identified areas where further improvements can be made.

The school's motto, 'Citizenship and community, Learning, Aiming high, Respecting ourselves and others, Enjoying learning' is put into practice and pupils talk readily about the many aspects of school life that they enjoy. Staff and governors recognise that enjoyment of learning and high achievement go hand in hand, and pupils said that the reason they like school is because 'teachers make it really fun'. In a music lesson seen during the inspection, pupils readily played instruments and sang together, showing genuine pleasure in developing their knowledge and understanding of rhythm and timbre. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about history activities, such as burying Anglo-Saxon treasures, and then rediscovering and reporting on someone else's treasures later in the term.

Almost all of the parents spoken to during the inspection were positive about the school, particularly those with children in the Reception class and those whose children have joined from other schools. They said that the school was very welcoming and that communication was good. Some parents have found the change of leadership unsettling and feel that they have yet to get to know you as the new headteacher as well as they would like to, despite opportunities such as coffee mornings being held. Parents responding to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are not unanimously positive about the school and a small number disagreed with several statements. However, there was a general consensus that children are happy at school and feel safe.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture in the school of keeping pupils safe and secure. Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. The school website contains all the required information. Your first priority as the new headteacher was to check that all policies and procedures to ensure pupils' safety were in place and up to date. Staff working at the school are all carefully checked and accurate records are kept. Governors regularly scrutinise these school records to ensure that there are no omissions. Policies are reviewed annually and amended in the light of new guidance provided. Safeguarding training is up to date for all staff and for the safeguarding governor, and staff understand the responsibilities they have to ensure

pupils' safety. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and have trust in the adults in school.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, including governors, know the school well and have a good understanding of its strengths but you are not complacent. You have meticulously scrutinised all aspects of the school with a relentless focus on pupils' achievement in order to build on the school's strengths and identify areas for improvement. You have involved staff and governors in creating plans for further improvement which correctly identify what needs to be done next. However, these plans do not always contain enough precision to enable governors to measure success throughout the year.
- Governors are highly committed and have a wide skills base which is used to support the school well. For example, one governor with financial expertise takes a leading role in monitoring the school's budget, whilst a former headteacher leads the curriculum committee. Governors regularly review their work and recently reorganised their responsibilities to ensure that they are as effective as possible.
- While outcomes at the end of Year 6 have historically been well above national averages, you recognised that in 2015 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing was lower than in previous years. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in reading last year was not as high as previously. You have ensured that provision in Year 6 is now of the highest standard. Work seen in pupils' books, and in lessons, shows that pupils in Year 6 are currently achieving well and making rapid progress in their learning.
- Standards in Year 2 have remained above average since the last inspection and the work of pupils currently in Year 2 is of a high standard. The proportion of pupils who passed the Year 1 phonics test, which dipped in 2014, was above average in 2015 because the school recognised that additional support was needed for the teaching of phonics in Year 1.
- By contrast, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year declined in 2015. As the majority of children join the school with skills that are broadly average, you have rightly identified this as an area for improvement. You have improved resources in the Reception class and these are being used well to support learning, and you have plans in place to further improve the outdoor learning environment. However, you agree that occasionally teaching is not as well focused as it needs to be to meet children's needs.

- The quality of teaching is generally good throughout the school but is strongest in Years 2 and 6 where teachers have very high expectations of all pupils and are skilled at supporting learning through effective questioning, well-planned tasks and effective feedback to support learning. You have paired teachers together so that support is provided where teaching is not as consistently strong, but could do more to utilise teachers' individual strengths to further improve practice.
- Pupils' behaviour was good at the time of the last inspection and remains good. Pupils are well behaved. They listen to adults and to each other; they cooperate and enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as those of team captains. Pupils said behaviour was good in school and rare instances of poor behaviour were quickly addressed by adults. In Year 6 in particular, pupils have highly positive attitudes to improving their own learning.
- The school provides a varied and rich curriculum with regular opportunities for drama and music performances, and participation in sports competitions and events such as the Scottish dancing competition. The school provides specialist teachers for music and physical education (PE), which pupils value. The specialist PE teaching has enabled all teachers to improve their skills in teaching PE because they work alongside the specialist for some of the lessons.
- You have carefully tracked the progress of disadvantaged pupils and the impact of provision put in place to support them. However, you have not considered how funding provided by the government to support these pupils could be used to ensure the improved attendance of the small number of disadvantaged pupils with lower levels of attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- leaders' plans for improvement contain more precision so that governors are able to measure progress
- teachers have more opportunities to share and exemplify best practice so that teaching improves further
- leaders improve the attendance of the small number of disadvantaged pupils with lower attendance.

Yours sincerely

Maria Curry

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and the leader for special educational needs. The inspector spoke with two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspector met with a small group of pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 and spoke with some parents in the playground. The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding, school development planning and pupils' outcomes. The inspector observed teaching, and pupils' work was evaluated.