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Mr Darryl Taylor
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Dear Mr Taylor

Short inspection of Claygate Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 June 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 December 2011.

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 established a strong, values-based culture and curriculum. All members of the community appreciate this approach, which has resulted in a calm, pleasant and respectful learning environment. Leaders have acted decisively to address the areas for improvement at the last inspection. You are attentive to the needs of most-able pupils. You are also committed to forming purposeful and productive relationships with parents.

Leaders respond deftly to the challenges faced by the constant changes in the pupil cohort. The proportions of pupils joining the school during a key stage or leaving it to take up opportunities elsewhere are well above the patterns seen nationally. The impact of these movements is difficult for leaders to assess. However, publicly held information for the school masks the fact that Claygate Primary School sometimes becomes accountable for some pupils' weaker prior performance in other schools or settings. For example, standards of writing seen in pupils' work are better than those shown in the published information relating to their performance in this subject. Teachers challenge all pupils to improve their writing clearly. In a Year 1 class, all adults were seen to support pupils' handwriting development. In Year 4, examples of work were seen that had been improved considerably by a helpful dialogue between the teacher and pupils so that the finished products were at a much higher standard. In Year 6, current pupils have produced a wide range of successful writing in a range of genres.

Some pupils, who may be disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and especially those who have joined the school late, lag behind their classmates to varying degrees. Most-able pupils were seen to be making strong progress but could accelerate even further with more stretching or challenging work.

The behaviour of pupils is developed from and complements the values on which the school is based. They are polite, courteous, friendly and engaging. All are proud of their school and are very happy to be part of it. Pupils participate enthusiastically in most lessons and take up the full range of opportunities provided by the rich curriculum and the wealth of extra-curricular activities on offer. The vast majority of pupils are prepared extremely well for the next stage of their education. They are also prepared well for life, having become confident and articulate with high levels of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding procedures and processes are carried out to a good standard. The checks the school makes on adults wishing to work or volunteer in the school are thorough. Any cover staff recruited from teacher supply agencies are subject to appropriate checks by the agency. Agencies routinely provide the school with information about the checks. Leaders regularly ask parents how safe they consider the children to be. The vast majority say that their children are not only safe at the school but very happy. Leaders also regularly ask the children if they feel safe. All but a few say that they love coming to school where they are looked after well and feel safe. This includes in the playground. Pupils also like the swimming pool and enjoy the weekly swimming lessons. Pupils learn about safety around water through these lessons and how to behave sensibly outside a normal classroom setting. The extensive site is secure and all visitors are challenged appropriately at the school reception. Visitors are not allowed entry without good reason. Suitable checks are made on any visitors. The school educates the children skilfully about e-safety, especially how to keep themselves safe online.

Leaders also ensure that any safeguarding training for staff is up to date. Leaders and governors have been trained recently in safer recruitment processes. Governors have recruited a volunteer human resources professional to oversee these and other important managerial processes. Leaders ensure that staff are fully informed of their responsibilities around safeguarding, including how to identify signs of abuse, neglect or 'grooming'. This all helps to keep pupils safe in education and more widely.

Inspection findings

- Leaders know their school extremely well. They know what is working effectively and where there are still things that they would like to be even better. Leaders were open and honest during the inspection and admirably reflective when there were clear points to be considered.

- Leaders know that there is more work needed to raise further the standards in writing for all pupils. Leaders are aware also of the need to make their communication with parents even more specific when dealing with parents' concerns about special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- You have adopted a very thorough method for reviewing the school's progress. All members of staff contribute effectively to the collection of information about current pupils' progress. Leaders have developed an effective system of assessment to replace the former national curriculum levels of attainment. You currently keep the system under review and adapt it as required. This is so that parents have regular access to information about their child's progress and development.
- Governors have a very clear understanding of the school and how well it is doing. They are focused appropriately on the right things, while also taking time to review their own work and seeking to recruit suitably qualified volunteers for the next stage of the school's development.
- The governing body already benefits from the expertise and qualifications of a number of skilled personnel. This means they are able to maintain a sharp oversight of the school's finances and matters related to the premises.
- Leaders ensure that all staff are prepared thoroughly for their roles. You provide training as required and in keeping with the school's development needs. Teachers are secure in their understanding of the principles and values which guide how they are to teach.
- Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils and make good use of time in lessons. They plan learning well and support pupils with high-quality materials and resources. Each classroom is adorned with a balanced combination of pupils' work and information to aid their acquisition of knowledge or further develop their understanding.
- You are justifiably proud of the rich curriculum and the wide array of extra-curricular activities. These all combine to provide a broad learning experience for pupils, where they have the chance to explore their creativity. In art, for example, this was supported during the inspection, by the provision of an artist in residence. In drama, it is supported with pupils' performance in assemblies and school productions. In music, pupils' creativity is developed with the help of a specialist music teacher. Pupils are also encouraged to be healthy and participate extensively in recreational and competitive sports.
- Teachers provide regular and challenging feedback to pupils. In many books, the impact of this work is seen clearly. In the best examples, pupils make instant improvements to the presentation or the quality of their work.
- Pupils make especially strong progress in mathematics. The expectation that all work will be set out neatly, whatever the method, calculation or problem to be solved, means that even the most disadvantaged pupils express themselves clearly. In one Year 6 class, current pupils were discussing articulately mathematical principles and methods while looking at the work of a mathematician from history. They were able to evaluate his work against the multiplication methods of other mathematicians.

- Learning in science is often supported by good-quality teaching. On occasions, however, it is limited by tasks which many pupils find too easy. Conversely, teaching in the foundation subjects provides frequent opportunities for pupils to explore ideas, texts and information in imaginative and exciting ways.
- Pupils display high levels of self-confidence and assurance. They speak clearly when invited to do so. Teachers are skilled at drawing out from them extended answers to any questions related to the content of lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is extremely good in lessons. They rarely disrupt each other and the school has not had to exclude any pupils for some considerable time.
- Occasionally the conduct of a tiny minority of pupils falls short of the school's reasonable expectations. When it does, leaders address it calmly and professionally. Not all parents agree that the resolution of such issues is handled in a timely manner. Sometimes they perceive that the outcomes should have been communicated more quickly.
- Learning in Reception is supported by the well-resourced, open-plan space. Teachers supervise and manage this area well, using opportunities as they emerge to build children's knowledge or extend their understanding.
- Adults support the development of pupils' reading through the systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Similar techniques are used to help pupils begin writing, or in using and applying number. Many children are confident already with their counting and can recognise even quite large written numbers. Increasingly, a large proportion of children attain a good level of development by the end of this important key stage.
- The school is deemed an 'overview school' by Surrey County Council. This means that it receives an annual review from an external consultant. Leaders appreciate this opportunity to discuss the school's performance.
- Leaders work collaboratively with other members of the Elmbridge partnership. They compare pupils' work with that of similar pupils in other schools locally to check that it is assessed according to an agreed understanding of what constitutes 'age-related' expectations.
- Leaders also cooperate well with secondary schools so that pupils' transition to the next stage of their education is smooth. This helps pupils make a good start in Year 7.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils' outcomes in writing are improved further
- even more purposeful means of communicating with parents are developed so as to address quickly any concerns or wishes.

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

Simon Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector conducted regular meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The inspector visited nearly every class briefly to observe learning, watched the Year 6 pupils rehearsing their end-of-year performance, and spent time around the campus during playtimes. The inspector met with governors. The inspector examined the checks that the school makes on adults working at the school or volunteering. He examined a wide range of the school's documentation including the self-evaluation document which includes the school development plan. On as many occasions as possible, the inspector spoke to pupils to gain their informal views of the school and to find out about what they were learning. The inspector took into account 19 responses to Ofsted's confidential online pupil survey. The inspector took into account 24 responses to Ofsted's confidential online staff survey. The inspector considered 81 responses to Ofsted's confidential online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally with nine parents at the school gate.