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29 March 2017

Miss Georgina Edwards
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Dear Miss Edwards

Short inspection of Cranford Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 2017, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since taking up post, you have provided strong and incisive leadership. You understand the strengths of the school and know what could be even better. You make effective use of pupils' progress information and ensure that everyone receives the support that they need to achieve well. You pay particular regard to the unique ethos at Cranford Park. The work you have carried out to redefine the school's values ensures that everyone learns in an environment rich with 'courage, peace and respect'.

You are supported well by capable senior leaders. The assistant headteacher provides particularly good support and has strong capacity to flourish further as a school leader. You have earned the respect of staff at Cranford Park by developing a productive and supportive working environment. A typical response to the staff survey was, 'I am very proud to work for a school with such a fantastic ethos. I am extremely grateful for the support I receive from the management team.'

There is a palpable sense of community at Cranford Park. Pupils work effectively alongside each other and enjoy learning. Their behaviour in and out of lessons is typically good. Pupils treat each other with respect. They reflected upon the importance of 'taking care of each other', and being supportive of each other's differences. During assembly, pupils enjoyed singing and creating music together.

There was much spirited enjoyment in this lively and productive session where the whole school came together. Parents hold the school in high regard. They appreciate the openness of leaders and teachers, and comment on the good progress that their children make. One parent commented, 'My daughter is blossoming into a confident and bright child. She comes out of school full of enthusiasm to tell me all about what she has learned.'

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You ensure that teachers are adept at assessing the progress pupils make during lessons. They use this information to adapt learning appropriately. Pupils understand how to improve their work because teachers provide helpful feedback. You have also recently made considerable changes to the way reading, writing and spelling are taught. The impact this is having on pupils' outcomes is significant. As a result, good progress is evident in your assessment information and in pupils' books. This work is still ongoing and rightly remains a focus for school leaders.

Across the school, pupils make good progress in a range of subjects from their different starting points. Those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well. Pupils who need to catch up are provided with the additional teaching and support they need. That said, leaders have rightly identified that, occasionally, teachers do not challenge the most able pupils rigorously enough to enable them to make accelerated progress. Leaders need to address this issue swiftly to ensure that these pupils achieve their very best.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is effective. All records are detailed and accurate and staff hold pupils' well-being in high regard. Leaders have effective knowledge of safe recruitment practices and ensure that when recruiting new staff all background checks are carried out appropriately. All policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated when necessary.

Staff and governors undertake regular and appropriate training to ensure that they know how to keep children safe. For example, they know the risks presented by radicalisation, and of female genital mutilation. Leaders ensure that staff know what to do if they have a concern regarding a child's safety. Those responsible for safeguarding work effectively with external organisations and professionals. They ensure that appropriate early help is available to support any child or family in need.

Leaders provide a variety of opportunities to ensure that pupils learn about risks and threats. For example, pupils know about the potential dangers when accessing the internet. They understand about 'stranger danger', and road safety. Pupils develop a healthy awareness of bullying during the school's 'friendship' week. As a result, pupils know how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we agreed to focus on three main areas of learning at Cranford Park. The first was how well middle-ability writers, particularly boys, achieve in key stage 1. We also looked at how leaders are ensuring that pupils make good progress in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar in key stage 2. The final area we addressed was how well pupils develop an understanding of equalities and British values so that they are equipped for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils learn a variety of techniques to improve their writing. For example, in Year 1 pupils were improving their sentences with well-chosen adjectives. One pupil wrote about 'the yellow and brown giraffe', another about 'three scary cheetahs'. In Year 2, one boy wrote, 'I was tearful when I started school because I missed my mum', demonstrating an effective grasp of the learning he had completed about suffixes and connectives. Current pupils in key stage 1, including boys and those of middle-ability, make typically good progress because teachers have good subject knowledge. You remain rightly vigilant to ensure that pupils' achievement in writing remains strong and continues to improve.
- You track pupils' progress in writing carefully. You understand pupils' specific needs and ensure that appropriate resources are always available to help them write more effectively. These help pupils make effective word choices, structure their work more appropriately, and help them review, edit and improve their writing successfully. You also provide additional help for those pupils who need to catch up. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well as a result. Occasionally, however, the most able pupils do not receive work that is suitably challenging. You are aware that more needs to be done to ensure that this group of pupils excel.
- Pupils develop their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills well. For example, in Year 3 pupils were developing ideas for creative writing. This included writing similes, metaphors and onomatopoeia. Pupils created some lively sentences including 'pleased as punch', and 'thunderous laughter' that brought spark and life to their poems. In Year 6, pupils were developing their ability to use relative clauses appropriately. One boy had written 'Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl, is one of the most famous figures in the world', demonstrating an effective grasp of using this more complex grammatical technique. The recent change in approach to teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar ensures that current pupils are making good progress. However, this work is relatively new and more needs to be done to ensure that pupils' achievements continue to rise rapidly.
- Pupils in key stage 2 typically read fluently and develop a love of reading. You have developed clear strategies to ensure that pupils read at home and at school. Pupils relish participating in the 'reading ladder' competitions that encourage them to read regularly from a variety of texts. The school library is used well and pupils report it has 'all the books you want to read'. Despite this, you were disappointed in pupils' achievements in reading in last year's end-of-key-stage-2 assessments. You continue to monitor closely pupils' progress in reading and know that this is an area that needs further development of teaching and learning.

- You ensure that pupils are ready for life in modern Britain by developing successfully their moral understanding. Teachers' high expectations and the school's behaviour policy help pupils understand right from wrong. They understand how the school's values of 'peace, respect and courage' link to the broader themes of British values. Pupils demonstrate an acute awareness of equality. As one pupil said, 'Cranford Park is a school where everyone respects each other.'
- You provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and beliefs. In Year 3, pupils had been learning about Judaism and Passover celebrations. Pupils explained about the different food eaten during this festival and how they had made their own 'Seder' plate. In Year 5, pupils had been learning about Italy. One boy had produced a detailed factsheet about the Vatican. Pupils' awareness of cultural and spiritual diversity is good because you provide a rich variety of learning experiences to broaden their knowledge and understanding.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop teaching and learning in reading in key stage 2, and writing in key stage 1, to further accelerate pupils' progress
- the most able pupils are typically challenged to make rapid progress across a range of subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning across key stages 1 and 2 jointly with senior leaders. I spoke to pupils, heard them read, and looked at work in their exercise books. Meetings were held with senior leaders and four members of the governing body. I also met with the representative from the local authority. I took into account 96 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 42 written comments. I also analysed 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. A range of documents was reviewed, including: the school's development plan, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school's single central record, information about pupils' achievement, the local authority's reports, and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.