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Mr Alexis Conway
Headteacher
Kingslea Primary School
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Dear Mr Conway

Short inspection of Kingslea Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Kingslea is a bright, happy and positive school which is held in high esteem in its community.

Supported by the deputy headteacher and a committed team of staff, you have pursued school improvement rigorously since your appointment 18 months ago, reinvigorating the school. You know your school very well. Your self-evaluation is accurate and you use performance information very effectively to determine what the school should do next. You have managed the large turnover of staff during this time as an opportunity to develop teachers' skills and improve learning for pupils. Many of your governors are also new to your school. They are committed to the drive for improvement and supportive of your leadership.

Pupils, parents and staff are proud to be part of your school community. Parents recognise how communication with them, the educational standards and the way their children's progress is monitored have all improved under your leadership. They appreciate your accessibility and find you and your staff approachable and helpful.

Throughout the school, pupils are proud of their work and want to do well. They are happy and confident. Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. They are aware that their behaviour affects everyone in the school. They are considerate of others and value kindness. Classrooms are calm and purposeful.

Pupils make rapid progress from their starting points on entry to Kingslea. Standards in the early years and the phonics screening check are the best they have been in three years. In lessons, teachers ensure that there is a strong emphasis on learning without sacrificing enjoyment. Pupils across all years are making good progress towards achieving national expectations for writing by the end of the academic year. You know, however, that improving the quality of writing further remains a key priority. The curriculum is broad and encompasses experiences beyond English and mathematics. The wide range of opportunities provided by your many after-school clubs and school charter activities are appreciated by parents and enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that systems for safeguarding are thorough and records are detailed and of high quality. Governors check carefully to ensure that these systems and records meet requirements and support a culture of safeguarding effectively. All staff receive good training through your induction programme and regular refresher training is provided. Frequent updates ensure that safeguarding is always a focus for all staff. Adults know how to report any concerns, and other agencies such as social services are notified quickly when needed. Vulnerable pupils are monitored carefully and the designated safeguarding lead is proactive in ensuring that pupils receive timely help. Pupils know about keeping themselves safe online and e-safety is regularly taught both in lessons and assemblies.

Parents are overwhelmingly confident that their children are safe at school and pupils say they feel safe. Pupils are in no doubt that they can talk to staff in school about any concerns and that teachers listen to them and understand them. If there are any issues, both parents and pupils feel they are dealt with effectively. Pupils say bullying is not common in the school, although some younger pupils find the boisterous play of some of their peers irritating at times. Pupils and parents are confident that staff intervene rapidly and effectively when necessary.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on: safeguarding arrangements for the school; how leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils attend school regularly; the effectiveness of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in writing and whether leaders have maintained the focus on school improvement and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- You have recognised the poor attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities over the past two years. Your strategies to improve attendance have been effective and have led to rapid improvement over a short period. You have developed a clear system for managing poor attendance which you and staff have applied consistently. Weekly attendance rewards for classes and termly certificates for individuals have halved the persistent absence of your vulnerable pupils which is now below the national average.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not achieve as well as others nationally over the past two years, particularly in key stage 1. Most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are now making similar progress from their starting points as all other pupils in the school and more than a third are making accelerated progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in class by knowledgeable teaching assistants. Pupils' work in their books shows that they are making increasingly rapid progress over time.
- Your skilful inclusion leader has secured extra help from outside the school for the majority of your pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She supports teachers in monitoring and planning provision for pupils, auditing their needs effectively and ensuring that they get extra help. She meets with parents regularly. Parents are very positive about the support their children have had from your staff both academically and emotionally. They are also pleased that their children now have the opportunity for outdoor learning, although this provision has not been in place long enough to evaluate its impact.
- You correctly identified the school's very poor previous performance in writing. You are determined for pupils to improve in this area and have ensured that writing is a whole-school focus. The English leader has used her expertise to monitor writing across the school, using her findings to match needs to staff training and giving staff feedback about pupils' next steps. She has worked with an expert from beyond the school to develop ways for pupils to take greater responsibility for their own progress and improve their writing further. Pupils now make better use of their grammar skills to edit their creative writing, but not yet as routinely in writing across the curriculum.
- Grammar teaching is strong and pupils achieve well in tests. The most able writers are encouraged through additional activities such as the able writers group. There is a commitment to improve literacy across the school and this begins in the early years where the learning environment encourages reading and writing.
- Pupils across all years are making good progress towards achieving national expectations for writing by the end of the academic year. At present, pupils in lower key stage 2 are making the most rapid progress and the standard of writing is good. Other year groups are making increased progress, but this is not as rapid as that in lower key stage 2. Despite a recent focus on spelling, it is not yet at the age-related standard in all year groups and you recognise that pupils need further support in this area. Handwriting, although clear in some books is not consistently good for all pupils, particularly the least able.
- The last inspection noted the leadership's focus on school improvement and pupils' achievement. You have revived this with your commitment to improving pupils' progress since joining the school. Your approach has resulted in accelerating progress in reading, writing and mathematics and the rich range of school experiences the curriculum now offers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the skills and standards of writing evident in English lessons are used routinely across the curriculum
- spelling skills are developed further so that all pupils spell at least at age-related standards
- good handwriting is promoted and taught to ensure that pupils can write legibly.

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

Yours sincerely

Lesley Corbett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader, the school's business manager, the English leader, four governors and a group of pupils. I also telephoned a representative for West Sussex local authority. I visited classes across the school with you and your deputy headteacher to observe teaching and learning. I also considered responses to the staff questionnaire and 154 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I took into account 98 responses to the parent free-text service and 97 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I analysed a range of documentation, including the school self-evaluation, the improvement plan, minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.