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13 July 2017

Mrs Karen Crutchfield
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Crutchfield

Short inspection of Caen Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 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 October 2012.

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 created a shared commitment that ensures the school continues to be a welcoming, safe and happy place where staff and families work together in mutual understanding.

In your absence, the acting headteacher, fully supported by staff and governors, sustains high aspirations, which foster the pupils' sense of security, confidence and readiness to learn. These are acknowledged and appreciated equally by staff, parents and pupils. Their views portray the school as, 'A caring community where people are listened to and treated respectfully.'

Pupils clearly enjoy being at school and behave well. Pupils are polite and well-mannered, including to visitors to the school. They contribute willingly to the very supportive relationships between staff and pupils that underpin good learning in all parts of the school.

As a united leadership team, which includes strong and supportive governance, you have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection successfully. For instance, you have used expertise from the local authority and other schools to strengthen the way teachers assess pupils' understanding. As necessary, teachers adapt their questioning and adjust the level of challenge in the work given to pupils to promote effective learning.

The previous inspection also identified that pupils should take more responsibility for their own behaviour and learning. Teachers now help pupils to develop these skills and sustain the resilience needed to support effective learning. Pupils in upper key stage 2 show particularly good interest and levels of understanding in their work. They use targets for improvement effectively to help quicken their progress.

The strategic decision to make full use of staff expertise by moving teachers into different classes this academic year has also strengthened teaching. In particular, this has helped teachers to improve the way they assess and tackle pupils' individual needs across the early years and Years 1 and 2.

Observations of pupils' responses in class and their work in books show that these decisive actions have restored pupils' good progress. As a result, more pupils are meeting and exceeding the standards expected for their age this year. However, your leadership team acknowledges the need to improve the presentation of pupils' written work in key stage 1 and further strengthen the development of handwriting and spelling across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality, especially those relating to the safe recruitment of staff. Leaders and governors check safeguarding procedures effectively. For example, they receive regular updates from administrative staff about accidents at school and take the necessary action to reduce risks and keep pupils safe.

There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe in school. All staff take their roles and responsibilities seriously. For example, staff carefully supervise pupils entering the school site at the beginning of the day and oversee their departure at the end of the day. Staff know the pupils well, especially those considered vulnerable. Staff know when and how to alert leaders to any concerns that they may have. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and parents to ensure that pupils are kept safe and their families are well supported.

The very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed the view that their children are well cared for and feel safe at school. The pupils I spoke to all said that they feel safe and get on well with other pupils. They respect their teachers and said that they would have no hesitation in telling a member of staff if they had any concerns.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry during this inspection examined the work of leaders and teachers in improving pupils' progress and attainment in writing in key stage 2. This was because the standards at the end of Year 6 in 2016, especially by boys, were below those found nationally.
- Leaders at all levels have focused well on improving pupils' writing this academic year to restore pupils' good progress. Pupils across key stage 2 respond well to

teachers' questioning and a range of initiatives that stimulate interest, promote deeper thinking and quicken progress. For example, pupils in Year 4 discussed ideas perceptively to adapt adverbial clauses. This enabled them to enrich their descriptions of different settings such as a forest or a desert. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are also using their widened vocabulary to deepen their ability to write expressively. For example, in Year 5 boys' and girls' writing about visiting Mayan ruins clearly shows their good understanding of how to write persuasively and tempt a reader to pay a visit. At times though, pupils' ability to write more fluently and at length is constrained by lower levels of skill in handwriting and spelling.

- The inspection's second line of enquiry considered the steps taken to raise standards and increase the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in writing and mathematics in key stage 1. This is because the proportion of pupils attaining high standards in these aspects was below that found nationally in 2016.
- Teachers across the early years and Year 1 and 2 classes liaise well together. Staff share their accurate assessments of pupils' developing skills effectively. This is enabling them to provide more suitable levels of expectation, challenge and stimulation in the work they set for the pupils. Consequently, pupils are learning more effectively and making good progress.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are responding with increased enthusiasm to a widened range of opportunities to write expressively and at length. The content of pupils' written work shows good development of their grammar and punctuation skills, as in Year 2, for example, when writing about their visit to a farm. However, pupils' handwriting and spelling skills are underdeveloped. Across Years 1 and 2, at times, the untidy way that pupils set out their work in different books reflects inconsistent expectations and slows their progress.
- Teaching is developing pupils' knowledge of technical terms to advance their understanding. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 show increasingly good skills in using adjectives and adverbs to write meaningful sentences. In mathematics, teaching is strong. Pupils set out their work neatly and use a range of strategies to solve problems. For example, pupils in Year 2 show good skills in using number lines to solve two-digit subtraction and multiplication problems and then confidently tackle word problems.
- My third line of enquiry examined the work of leaders and teachers in supporting the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those from service families. This is because, although narrowing over time, there remained some difference between the standards achieved by these pupils in relation to other pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2016.
- You ensure that staff assess pupils' needs accurately and gather a clear understanding of the barriers to learning for these pupils. You and other leaders, including governors, use this information to carefully consider and implement strategies that help pupils to achieve well in relation to their different starting points. The pupil premium funding is used effectively, for example to provide extra speech and language support. Additional service funding is used well to provide extra teaching. This is helping these pupils to catch up, for example, in

basic numeracy. As a result, there are examples of disadvantaged pupils who have not just caught up with other pupils, but are now attaining more highly, especially in reading.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers sustain a high expectation of presentation of work in pupils' writing books, especially in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2
- there is a more consistent and effective approach to the teaching and development of pupils' handwriting and spelling across 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 Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the time of the inspection, in your absence, the deputy headteacher led the school as an acting headteacher. During the inspection, I held meetings with the acting headteacher and with the other staff with leadership responsibilities. I met with members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I visited classrooms with the acting headteacher and together we scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual staff during visits to classrooms, and with pupils and support staff during the morning break. In addition, I examined a range of documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' attendance, progress and school self-evaluation and development. I took account of 76 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and 71 additional written comments from parents. I also took note of 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.