

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 March 2018

Mrs Deborah Smith
Headteacher
Wickham Common Primary School
Gates Green Road
Coney Hall
West Wickham
Kent
BR4 9DG

Dear Mrs Smith

Short inspection of Wickham Common Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the inspection of the predecessor school. Since your appointment, you have accurately assessed the school's strengths and rightly prioritised areas needing improvement. Together with governors you have developed plans to bring about improvements. These are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. It is clear that since your appointment in September 2017, you have begun to establish a new direction for the school. Your determined and focused leadership has ensured that all adults are fully supportive of your vision and staff morale is high. Parents and carers who responded to the online survey praised the school's work and were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They were confident that their children are well looked after and effectively taught. Parents expressed confidence in your leadership and value how readily available you are to meet with them.

The school benefits from a strong team of knowledgeable and effective governors. Together with senior leaders, they demonstrate high expectations. Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account for pupils' progress. They are fully committed to improving the school and work effectively with leaders. They are clear about their purpose and determined to ensure that the school secures the best outcomes for its pupils. Governors regularly check their own skills and attend training. They actively recruit new members to the governing body who have specific and relevant expertise to strengthen governance further. As a result, governors have a strong and consistently positive impact on school development.

Staff are well motivated to develop their practice in order to meet the needs of all pupils and accelerate pupils' progress further. This is particularly the case in writing where we agreed there is further work needed. The curriculum ensures that pupils develop key skills across subjects, broadening pupils' minds, and helping them to think critically about the world. Work in pupils' books shows that leaders have extended the opportunities that pupils have to write regularly across a wide range of curriculum subjects. The school offers a wide range of popular activities, including art, drama and music. Many pupils learn to play a musical instrument. All pupils develop their learning in the school's wooded area and in local woods.

Pupils work hard and have positive attitudes. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very calm and orderly. Pupils respect each other and work well together. They are polite and friendly towards adults and visitors. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning and are well motivated to do their best. Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of a very high quality. All staff have received the required training to support their knowledge of safeguarding issues and to understand their responsibilities. Leaders have made sure that clear procedures are in place and staff know how to report any concerns. Leaders work very effectively with external agencies to help safeguard pupils. Leaders take swift action where there are concerns relating to pupils' safety and well-being.

Pupils reported that they feel safe at school and parents who responded to the online survey supported this view.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, I met with you and senior leaders to agree the key lines of enquiry. The first key line of enquiry was to consider the progress that pupils make over key stage 1 in writing. This was agreed because attainment at the end of key stage 1 suggests that pupils may not make consistently strong progress from the end of the Reception Year to the end of Year 2.
- We visited classes in key stage 1 together and looked at written work in pupils' books. I found that pupils concentrate, work hard and listen carefully. I also found that sometimes the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to deepen their learning.
- We also agreed as a second key line of enquiry that the inspection would consider how effectively leaders are improving the progress that pupils make in writing in key stage 2 in order to increase the proportion of pupils working at greater depth by the end of Year 6.
- Assessment information shows that during key stage 2, pupils do not make as strong progress in writing as in reading and mathematics. You have identified improving pupils' progress in writing as a priority for the school.

- You have worked hard to make sure that the most able pupils in key stage 2 are challenged in writing. Leaders have introduced new strategies to improve the quality of the teaching of writing. Pupils enjoy the engaging activities that teachers set them. Workbooks show that pupils practise writing texts regularly across a range of subjects. Leaders have been successful in supporting teachers to teach writing in a consistent way. Leaders are keen to develop these initiatives further.
- I also looked at the quality of pupils' written presentation. This was a priority for improvement at the time of the last inspection of the predecessor school. I observed how well pupils now take care over their presentation. They are rightly proud of their progress. Work in books is generally neat and painstaking. Pupils' handwriting is neat and fluent. Leaders have made sure that pupils develop handwriting skills in the early years provision. In Reception classes, children start to learn to link letters together when they write and they do so carefully.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress in writing across the school improves by ensuring that initiatives are embedded
- the most able pupils in key stage 1 are sufficiently challenged in their writing tasks.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bromley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Linda Harvey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with leaders to discuss the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements since the last inspection. Together we visited classes in early years and in key stages 1 and 2. We observed teaching and learning and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. I talked to pupils about their learning, experience of school life and how safe they feel. I held meetings with leaders, governors and held discussions about safeguarding. I took account of the views of 98 parents who completed the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and their written comments. I also took account of the views of 31 members of staff together with pupil views, both from the online inspection surveys and conversations with those I met during the day.