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Dear Mr Gale

Short inspection of Earlswood Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 the school was judged to be good in November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have a very clear and effective vision for the school of enabling pupils to achieve as well as they can and be fully prepared for the challenges of life beyond junior school. There is a strong family ethos underpinning this school. Parents and carers, staff and pupils commented on the way that everyone puts pupils' best interests at the heart of the school's work. Leaders have developed a strongly inclusive culture in the school, which pupils understand and embrace. Parents are fulsome in their praise of the school. One parent said, 'There is an overriding feeling of belonging and family.' Many others echoed this view.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy all that it has to offer. They are friendly, polite and self-assured, welcoming visitors and asking for their views about the school. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Classrooms are orderly places where pupils work hard and achieve well. Displays in classrooms and around the school reflect the high standards that leaders promote and celebrate pupils' many achievements across the curriculum.

Senior leaders understand the importance of interesting, purposeful and challenging teaching. They have made sure that teachers have secure subject knowledge so that they are well equipped to teach the full range of subjects. Teachers plan lessons that are based on accurate assessments of pupils' prior learning. They anticipate when pupils may need extra support, even before the start of the topic being taught. Teachers ensure that pupils who need it receive extra instruction to

help prepare them for new learning, so that pupils are able to tackle new ideas confidently. This also enables less confident pupils to have a head start when the class is learning something new. When pupils start to slip behind, teachers swiftly intervene to secure their understanding and help them to keep up. Teachers also challenge pupils, including the most able, by asking searching questions and providing work that deepens pupils' understanding, especially in mathematics. This practice has addressed the areas that inspectors asked leaders to improve at the last inspection.

Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 improved in 2017 to being in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher standards was above national figures, especially in reading and mathematics. There are even greater proportions of pupils than previously on track to achieve the expected standards at the end of Year 6 this year. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress, including most disadvantaged pupils. However, their progress is not strong enough to enable them to attain as well as other pupils in school. Senior leaders and governors also recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make consistently good progress from their starting points.

Governors know the school well because they draw evidence from a range of sources. They share the same high aspirations of senior leaders and are effective in challenging them to bring about further improvements in the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together with senior leaders and governors, you have ensured that the school has a culture which places an unswerving focus on making sure that pupils are safe and well cared for. One parent commented, 'Staff have a genuine care and desire to make my child feel safe.'

Leaders ensure that all who work in the school have the right training from the moment that they start their work. This training is regularly reviewed, refreshed and updated, so that staff are thoroughly equipped to look after pupils. As a result, all staff have a detailed understanding of how to recognise and report concerns about pupils' well-being. Staff record even minor concerns assiduously, because they recognise that their observation may form part of a much bigger picture of wider concerns later on. Staff carry out all the right checks so that only suitable people are allowed to work in the school. Governors check regularly that these checks have been carried out correctly.

Pupils feel entirely safe in school and part of the school's family. They trust the staff completely to look after them. Bullying is very rare and quickly dealt with when it does arise. One younger pupil said, 'You can rely on your teachers if you have a worry.' Pupils said that, although the playground is busy, it is a friendly place, where they feel safe and where pupils look after each other. Teachers provide lessons to help pupils stay safe in a range of situations, including around water, in the sun and when riding a bicycle. Leaders place a high priority on educating pupils

and their families about online safety. Pupils have learned these lessons and have a good understanding of how to stay safe when on the internet.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that I would focus on three aspects of the school's work. The first explored the effectiveness of leaders' and governors' actions to improve outcomes in writing, especially for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in writing. The proportion of pupils on track to achieve the expected standard at the end of Year 6 is higher than in 2017, when it was just below the national average. A greater proportion of pupils are also on track to achieve the greater depth standard.
- Leaders have made accelerating the rate of progress of disadvantaged pupils a priority. You commissioned a review of your spending of the pupil premium earlier this year to understand better how to help these pupils. You have followed up the recommendations of the review. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress this year. In some year groups, this progress is diminishing the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils in school. You agreed that disadvantaged pupils make the strongest progress in Years 5 and 6 because teachers apply high levels of expectation more consistently.
- Most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in writing. Teachers understand pupils' needs and, well supported by the SEN manager, enable them to achieve well towards individual targets. However, leaders do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make compared with that of other pupils with similar starting points, so that they cannot evaluate the provision with enough precision and accelerate their progress further.
- I also investigated what contributed to the greatly improved proportions of pupils achieving the greater depth standards in mathematics in 2017. Leaders ensure that pupils new to the school have a secure foundation of the knowledge and skills in mathematics needed to make good progress. Where gaps in pupils' learning are identified, staff provide extra support so that pupils are not hindered in their future learning. Teachers have a clear focus on the most able pupils and move them on quickly once it is clear they are ready.
- Leaders have brought about a sharper focus on enabling pupils to practise and strengthen reasoning skills. Reasoning is threaded through most mathematics lessons, and teachers expect pupils to give clear reasons for their answers. Teachers also provide challenging problems that require pupils to think carefully and reason logically. We saw this in Year 6, where pupils were looking closely at examples of calculations that had been done incorrectly. They identified how the mistake had been made before explaining how the calculation should be done. This has helped pupils to develop greater resilience and persistence in mathematics and to apply their mathematical knowledge in different situations.
- Finally, I looked closely at the wider curriculum and how well it enables pupils to

achieve. Senior leaders take great pride in the curriculum and rightly see it as a strength of the school. Parents and pupils are full of praise for the richly varied curriculum that opens up a range of learning and experiences to pupils. One parent spoke for many when they said that the school 'does a fantastic job to instil a love of learning in the children'.

- Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects, including science, where they have regular opportunities to experiment and find things out for themselves. Pupils learn to cook, and include vegetables that they have grown in recipes, as well as eggs from the school's hens. They learn a variety of skills in the extensive grounds and woodland area. You also point to pupils' successes in music and physical education. Specialist teachers use their expert subject knowledge to help pupils achieve high standards in these subjects. The school's orchestra and two choirs perform successfully for a number of different audiences. For example, the choir performed recently at the O2 Arena. The school's teams have been successful in many local competitions in such sports as rugby, netball and hockey.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- differences between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and others in school continue to diminish
- leaders have more detailed information about the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so that they and governors are able to evaluate sharply the effectiveness of support.

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

Bruce Waelend
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and senior leaders to discuss various aspects of the school's work. I also met with four members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority on the telephone. We visited classes from all year groups with the executive headteacher and the head of schools to observe teaching and learning, to talk to pupils and to look at their work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtime. Several pupils spoke with me on the playground at morning break. I also had a meeting with members of the school council. I considered 79 responses to the pupil questionnaire, 66 responses to the

staff survey and 90 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to several parents at the beginning of the day. A range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documents, school improvement plans, and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks were also taken into account.