

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



25 May 2018

Mrs Helen Roberts
Otford Primary School
High Street
Otford
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN14 5PG

Dear Mrs Roberts

Short inspection of Otford Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 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.

You have secured notable developments in the school's work since your appointment in 2016. You have increased teachers' expectations of pupils' progress, improved the quality of teaching and extended the curriculum. You have restored focus and direction for the school following an unsettled period in its history. Staff morale has recovered and is high.

You have introduced a much greater sense of urgency to the school's work in the past 18 months. You have ensured that teachers, teaching assistants and governors are securely focused on ensuring that pupils make the best progress possible from their starting points. You have brought rigour to systems to check the quality of teaching and you have ensured clarity about those aspects of the school in need of further improvement. As a result, you and your governors have an accurate and realistic view of the school's performance.

You have secured significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in the early years. As a result, children make much stronger progress than previously. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2017 was above the national average and higher than outcomes in 2016.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are typically higher than the national average. However, in the past, high outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have sometimes

masked the fact that pupils in some year groups were not making as much progress as they should. You have worked positively and successfully with your team to rectify this situation and have made substantial improvements in the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils make better progress than before. However, you rightly recognise that the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school do not always achieve as well as they should. You are now intent on making sure that disadvantaged pupils make the same consistently strong progress as other pupils.

You and your team have addressed in full the key issues identified at the time of the previous inspection. You have reviewed and updated mathematics teaching so that pupils make better progress in mathematics than previously and you have enriched the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to develop personal interests and skills in music, art and sport. You have extended the leadership team and, in so doing, have strengthened the school's capacity to secure further improvements.

Pupils enjoy school and work extremely hard. Their mature and sensible behaviour makes a strong contribution to the school's calm, purposeful atmosphere. Parents and carers are very happy with the school. They recognise notable improvements in the school's work since your appointment.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Clear and consistent safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are safe and secure. You and your team make sure that all necessary recruitment checks are completed promptly and fully and that staff and pupil records are stored confidentially.

You make sure that staff and governors are well qualified in safeguarding so that they are knowledgeable and confident about what to do if they have a concern. Governors are keenly aware of their responsibility for pupils' safety and regularly audit safeguarding arrangements with leaders. The school buildings and grounds are tidy, attractive and well organised so that pupils can learn and play securely. Strong relationships throughout the school make a positive contribution to pupils' confidence and well-being. Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused particularly on: how well mathematics teaching extends learning for all groups of pupils; the quality of teaching and learning during key stage 1, particularly for the most able pupils; pupils' attendance; and how well middle and subject leaders contribute to the school's development.
- In the past, inconsistencies in teaching led to variations in pupils' progress between different classes and year groups across the school. Leaders have rectified this so that pupils of all abilities, including the most able, benefit from consistently effective teaching across all key stages. As a result, pupils' progress has improved during the past 18 months.

- The revised mathematics curriculum gives teachers clear guidance about what to teach, and when, and ensures that pupils' learning builds more effectively than before. The mathematics leader has worked constructively with teachers to improve the mathematics curriculum and to support improvements in mathematics teaching.
- Pupils have more opportunities than previously to use their mathematical knowledge to solve number problems and to explain their reasoning. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 5 used their knowledge of shape and number to investigate emerging patterns in their findings. The work in pupils' books indicates that this approach is now consistently in place in all classes and is strengthening pupils' mathematical understanding. Pupils become confident mathematicians by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning. They set work which challenges and motivates pupils of all abilities, including the most able, to work hard and to do their best. This ensures that pupils in different classes complete work of equally high quality.
- Leaders are acutely aware of the need to ensure that teaching extends learning fully for all groups of pupils. They continually look for ways of improving the curriculum to ensure that this is the case. For example, the recent introduction of daily 'grappling tasks' has gone down very well with pupils. Although this initiative is still in the early stages, pupils already report a number of benefits from this approach, including helping them to 'get into the right mood for learning', giving them the opportunity to 'think about the task set first and about what they already know, instead of being told what to do from the start' and 'making learning more interesting'.
- You, your leaders and governors are determined to ensure that every group of pupils, no matter how small in number, achieves the best outcomes possible. They are now firmly focused on making sure that disadvantaged pupils make the same strong progress as their classmates. The recently appointed inclusion manager has already made a good start in reviewing pupils' needs, establishing relationships with parents and checking that support for individual pupils is proving effective. She is committed to ensuring that all vulnerable pupils achieve well and she provides strong leadership for this important aspect of the school's work.
- You have established a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and effective team of senior and middle leaders who share your vision for the school's future. You, alongside your deputy headteachers and inclusion manager work very well together as a team and have quickened the pace of development in the school during the past year. Subject leaders have made good use of advice and training to develop their roles in improving the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have reversed a decline in pupils' attendance since the previous inspection. The recently appointed inclusion manager has improved links with parents and agencies. She keeps a close eye on pupils' attendance and acts quickly if she has any concerns about individual pupils' attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the small number of disadvantaged pupils make the same consistently strong progress as other pupils in 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 Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited seven lessons with you and your two deputy headteachers during the inspection. I spoke with pupils and looked at their books during my visits to the classrooms. I also looked separately at a sample of pupils' workbooks.

I met with six pupils to discuss their experiences of school. I also spoke with pupils in the playground during the lunchtime break. I met with you, your deputy headteachers and with other senior leaders. I also met with two governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.

I took account of 123 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as letters from parents. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness and the school's improvement plan. I also looked at a range of safeguarding documents.