

29 June 2018

Mrs Pauline Crowhurst
Headteacher
Stocks Green Primary School
Leigh Road
Hildenborough
Tonbridge
Kent
TN11 9AE

Dear Mrs P Crowhurst

Short inspection of Stocks Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 school was judged to be good in March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You continue to show a drive and commitment to improve the school. You and your team are ambitious to develop further the quality of education that pupils receive. Parents are very supportive of the work that you do and share your high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff have risen to the challenge you have set them to increase the effectiveness of their practice. In 2017, you and your team swiftly addressed dips in performance by taking urgent action to improve provision. You have also made strong links with a group of local schools to share best practice, develop leadership and improve moderation.

This is a school where pupils enjoy learning and try their best. They are excited about school and the overwhelming majority are very positive about their experiences. Some pupils described how much they missed going to school during the holidays because they appreciate the vibrant and interesting curriculum. They particularly enjoy the many opportunities that they have to study outside of the formal classroom. Pupils also talked animatedly about the positive and friendly atmosphere across the school. The school is a stimulating environment, with high-quality displays showing pupils' work to great effect. You have developed innovative approaches to increase participation in healthy activities. For example, the after-school skateboarding sessions are very popular with boys and girls. Pupils are also proud of the many opportunities that they have to develop their leadership skills and, as a result, they are confident and articulate learners.

Parents are extremely positive about the school and appreciate the work that you have done to create a thriving community. They describe the school as 'a lovely caring environment' where teachers do everything that they can to support pupils through their school career. Parents describe leaders' work to improve transition to secondary school as a strength, and report that staff are 'passionate and approachable'. One parent even sought me out to share her experience of how well her child was supported when he moved to the school during key stage 2. Parents are committed to the school and support you to raise funds through a strong parent teacher association. For example, parents and staff have recently raised significant sums for a charity that is closely connected to the school.

You have maintained the strengths identified in the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the ends of key stages 1 and 2 is in line with, or above, that seen nationally. Most pupils achieve or exceed the standards expected for their age. Achievement is highest in reading so that, in 2017, more pupils exceeded age-related expectations in key stage 2 than was seen nationally. Achievement at key stage 1 is also well above the national average and almost all pupils in Year 1 achieve the expected standards in their phonics assessment. You are not complacent, however. You aspire to even higher standards so that more pupils exceed national expectations across the curriculum than in the past, especially those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

You have largely addressed the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. In 2017, more pupils than before exceeded the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in reading and writing. Pupils are now much more confident when talking about their learning. In Year 2, the most able pupils could articulate clearly what language devices and vocabulary would improve their opening paragraphs, as well as self-correct when given the opportunity to do so. In Year 3, pupils used reasoning skills effectively, without support from their teacher, to show why an answer could not be correct. Pupils are increasingly confident in mathematics lessons to use a range of methods to come to an answer. However, a few of the most able pupils find work too easy because they complete it swiftly.

Safeguarding is effective.

The well-being of all pupils is central to the school's work. All parents and staff who completed the questionnaire agreed that pupils are safe and well cared for at the school. Parents commented on the quality of the support that they received when their children suffered anxiety or illness. The school has an open and inclusive environment so that those pupils with additional needs feel welcome. As a result, attendance is high and above the national average. Relationships are strong and the specialist team, that supports pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, goes the extra mile to get these pupils the best support from external agencies.

The school's safeguarding policy adheres to the latest government guidance. The systems and procedures in place to keep children safe are thorough. Those staff

with additional responsibility are appropriately trained, and leaders and governors regularly scrutinise this aspect of the school's work. Staff receive regular training and are aware of what to do if they have worries about a pupil. Concerns are reported, recorded and acted on in a timely fashion.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, pupils' achievement in writing in key stages 1 and 2, the progress of the most able pupils in mathematics in key stage 2, and how well governors and leaders ensure that the disadvantaged pupils achieve well.
- The proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations in writing were above those proportions seen nationally in 2017 at the end of key stage 2. Despite this, you were disappointed with the progress of pupils who had attained the expected standard in key stage 1. Fewer of these middle-attaining pupils than expected reached or exceeded the nationally expected standard. You and your leaders have carefully analysed the school's approach to developing writing. Teachers have now incorporated more challenging practice into the teaching of writing at both key stages. You have also improved your assessment strategies, following improved collaboration with other local schools. Pupils are developing their joined handwriting at an earlier age. They are able to use a wider range of self-editing and writing techniques than before. Pupils are also more confident in using more challenging vocabulary, and writing in different forms. Consequently, more pupils at key stages 1 and 2 are writing at greater depth than in the past.
- Pupils attain well in key stage 1 in mathematics. In 2017, more pupils exceeded or achieved the expected standards than the national average. As a result, pupils begin key stage 2 with strong starting points in the subject. In the past, the most able pupils have not made as much progress by the end of key stage 2 as you would wish. In 2016 and 2017, fewer of the most able pupils achieved high standards than you expected. Following useful support from the local authority, you have changed your approaches to stretch the most able pupils in mathematics. These pupils are increasingly developing their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Key stage 2 mathematics books show that these pupils are now attempting more challenging work, and testing themselves more frequently. However, these new approaches to challenging the most able pupils are not yet embedded across all of key stage 2.
- The pupil premium grant is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attain expected standards at the end of key stage 2. As you acknowledge, some of these pupils in the past have not made as much progress as they should. Consequently, you have taken steps to improve the provision for them. You and your leaders have reinvigorated how you use the funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Governors are very knowledgeable about the variety of highly personalised approaches to enhance provision for these pupils, and challenge you effectively over their progress. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are fully involved in all aspects of school life. Attendance is improving for these pupils and the majority are making expected progress from their starting points.

However, those few disadvantaged pupils with strong starting points do not get enough support and help to ensure that they attain above the expected standards in reading, writing and, especially, mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more of the most able pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve high standards and make consistently strong progress, particularly in mathematics in key stage 2, by ensuring that the work they are given is suitably challenging.

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

Seamus Murphy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority. I reviewed documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, school-planning documentation, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. I observed pupils around the school and in their classes. Together, we visited classes across the school. In the classes, I observed teaching, looked at books, and spoke to pupils about their work. I met with 15 pupils at breaktime to get their views of the school. I took account of parents' views by speaking to them in the playground in the afternoon, and considered 81 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text responses. I also considered the 98 responses to the pupils' questionnaire and the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.