

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



18 July 2018

Mr John Budden
Headteacher
Clare House Primary School
Overbury Avenue
Beckenham
Kent
BR3 6PY

Dear Mr Budden

Short inspection of Clare House Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in May 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your senior team provide clear, principled leadership. You have managed the school's growth successfully and the move into the new building. You expect pupils to achieve very well and to enjoy a wide range of high-quality, exciting experiences, across all subjects. Strong, coherent systems ensure that this happens. School improvement planning is well targeted. Parents are understandably very pleased. One commented, for many: 'My child enjoys learning and enjoys telling us what she has done each day. All the teachers work incredibly hard to support their pupils and maintain a brilliant school with a positive vibe.'

You have positively addressed recommendations from the last inspection. Teaching is purposeful, clear and generally closely matched to pupils' needs. One pupil said of the staff, 'We don't get muddled up once they have explained it.' Staff benefit from strong professional development. Their performance is managed well. They enjoy working at the school, and are confident in leaders. Staffing is stable.

Pupils like school. Their behaviour is very positive. Right from the early years, they show strong dispositions for learning, such as concentration.

You and other leaders check very thoroughly how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics. This focus leads to pupils in all groups making strong progress and reaching very high standards in these subjects, from Reception to Year 6.

The school provides absorbing lessons in the other subjects too, led by a capable and enthusiastic team of middle leaders. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils achieve well in these subjects, but that there are areas where they could do even better. The school has not yet devised systems for checking on this for itself. Staff focus more on checking provision than the pupils' learning. You know this and have organised a new system to check pupils' achievement in science. We agreed that this should broaden out to other subjects, so that you and the staff get better information promptly about pupils' performance in all subjects.

You do much to build a sense of community. Pupils have many opportunities to take real responsibility, for instance as school councillors. Parents contribute useful expertise. They receive helpful communications from staff, and feel welcome in school. There is a diverse programme of sporting activity. Pupils have wonderful opportunities for music making, using expertise from the local music education hub. All learn instruments in class and sing together accurately. Many take this further, performing together at a high standard on wind instruments, for example.

The active local governors support and challenge the school suitably. They and the multi-academy trust board ensure together that the right checks and balances exist. The trust supports school self-evaluation helpfully through its regular programme of reviews of the school. You make useful links with the primary and secondary schools across the trust. This helps with transition and in setting challenging expectations for pupils. Some older pupils noted, however, that they would like to know more about secondary schools outside the trust.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your senior team arrange thorough training for all staff in the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Administrative staff carry out pre-employment checks thoroughly and keep the single central record up to date. This is to confirm that adults in school are suitable to work with children. Pupils feel happy, secure and very well cared for. They explained clearly the emergency lockdown procedure and how they as individuals can get help.

You and your staff team are adept at nipping any safeguarding or behaviour problems in the bud. For example, the very few occurrences of bullying and racist name-calling are usually stopped urgently, before becoming more serious. Records of such incidents are very clearly kept and well analysed, to avoid future problems.

Pupils' attendance is very high. Absences are quickly followed up to ensure that pupils not at school are accounted for and safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was about whether pupils do as well in key stage 2 as they do in key stage 1, and the early years. I focused particularly on boys and pupils with high attainment, as some historic data indicated that these pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics may slow a little in key stage 2.
- It became apparent that there are no significant concerns about achievement in key stage 2, for any pupil groups, including boys and higher attainers. Their high attainment in the younger year groups is successfully built on. Pupils do well.
- The second line of enquiry looked at how effectively the school spends its pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- This money is spent carefully and effectively. The school knows key research about disadvantage well. All disadvantaged pupils, whatever their needs and aptitudes, receive bespoke academic mentoring from a dedicated teacher, individually or in very small groups. Along with the class lessons, and any other specific help they may receive, this enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. Their attendance at school is high.
- I found, however, that disadvantaged pupils are under-represented in the high-profile, extra-curricular activities in physical education and music. Leaders do not routinely check on this but, now it has been considered in the inspection, it raises questions for you about why these pupils are not as involved as others.
- My third agreed line of enquiry was about how well pupils write.
- Teachers are adept at helping pupils to develop their writing. You and the staff have well-considered, exacting expectations. Standards are high. Pupils use spelling, grammar and punctuation accurately and form letters neatly. They know the importance of audience and write for many purposes. In Reception, children write simple stories and lists successfully. In Year 3, pupils carefully chose words such as 'brave', 'powerful' and 'threatening' to build an impression.
- Pupils really enjoy the opportunity to contribute to and look at the school's new online blog, which provides them opportunities to write for pleasure for a real audience. They also enjoy being journalists and librarians.
- Finally, I considered with you the impact of the school's curriculum across the subjects and how well this is managed.
- You and I readily found evidence of high-level learning across a range of subjects. The new 'dig deeper' questions can be really challenging for pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils worked hard to compare food production and consumption in their grandparents' generation and now. Year 6 pupils enquired successfully into 'how adaptation may lead to evolution'. Children in Reception really enjoyed finding out about spiders, in very well organised tasks; some children took this further, exploring several types of wood. On-site provision for outdoor learning in the wooded area is popular and effective. The specialist teaching of French in key stage 2 is well structured. Pupils enjoy well-planned visits out, including a recent residential stay in Norfolk, which involved virtually all

of the Year 6 pupils.

- The curriculum, then, is very strong. But some improvements are still possible. For instance, art is well taught but occasionally lessons are missed out. Pupils learn about different religions, but their understanding could be deeper. Composition in music is not as evidently well developed as performing. The singing repertoire is not routinely broad. Such things are not always known to leaders and they somewhat restrict the opportunities for pupils to excel.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- improve the evaluation of pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics, so that sharply focused, impactful tweaks can be made in these subjects where needed
- analyse, as a matter of course, the take-up of extra-curricular activities by disadvantaged pupils, and address any issues that may arise, such as the current relatively low level of participation.

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

Robin Hammerton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders, members of staff, the chief executive of the multi-academy trust and governors. I visited several lessons with you indoors and out. I looked at pupils' work, especially their writing. I observed and listened to instrumental ensembles and a choir. I evaluated school documents, such as curriculum planning, safeguarding information, policies, strategic plans and evaluations. I also considered information about pupil premium expenditure and its impact. I met with pupils. I also looked carefully at confidential online questionnaires from 171 pupils, 37 members of staff, and the opinions of 201 parents who responded via Parent View.