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6 August 2018

Miss Kelly Stock
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Dear Miss Stock

Short inspection of Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has 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 and may be improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You, your leaders and governors have been relentless and taken decisive action in pursuing excellence under difficult conditions. Significant turnover of staff, including senior leaders, has made it difficult for you to lead improvements. However, in a time of turbulence you have improved the quality of teaching through regular checking and providing significant training and bespoke support for staff. This has resulted in rapidly improving outcomes for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in all key stages and subjects. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average.

The previous inspection report asked that you improve outcomes in mathematics. Lessons in mathematics are now challenging, exciting and well matched to the needs of pupils. This has been a significant success story, with attainment and progress in mathematics making it the strongest-performing subject. This is due to your leaders implementing a well-chosen curriculum and investing significantly in resources and training for teachers and teaching assistants.

You and your governors provide clear direction and ambition, creating a strong sense of community and purpose. This motivates staff and enables pupils to achieve very well. Leaders make good use of external partners to moderate results and to inform detailed plans to secure further improvement. Parents, carers and staff alike recognise the very high quality of leadership in your school.

Many parents I spoke with during the inspection appreciate the efforts staff make to support them in helping their children. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities in particular commented on the excellent provision for their children and the rapid progress they are making. One parent commented that the school 'not only helps pupils but helps the whole family'.

You ensure that your broadly topic-based curriculum, together with many high-quality enrichment experiences, keeps your pupils interested and motivated. A significant strength of the school is the high standards achieved in music, art, physical education (PE) and Spanish. Teachers in foundation subjects have a strong focus on developing pupils' subject-specific skills, and their use of language. For example, I noted that Year 2 pupils were able to demonstrate the correct stance and posture for relay-passing in PE. In Year 4, pupils made statues in the style of Mayan art, discussing the use of colour, brush selection for achieving specific strokes and choice of pattern to represent particular ideas. Pupils talked with excitement about owls visiting their school, using an earthquake simulator, an enterprise day and exploring a local art trail. Pupils also enthused about the wide range of clubs and sporting activities provided for them.

Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. Their behaviour is faultless. They are keen to contribute to their school. For example, pupils are elected as school councillors and house captains, and are trained as play leaders, eco-warriors and librarians. Pupils are articulate and express their views and opinions confidently. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary. They work very well together. Pupils are proud of their school and their work, as shown by the many high-quality displays and the excellent presentation of work in their books.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. As the safeguarding leader, you place a high priority on keeping pupils safe and ensuring that staff are vigilant at all times. You check that records are detailed and accurate. All staff, governors and volunteers receive regular training updates and know how to alert leaders to any concerns that they have. Visitors are provided with the necessary information should they have a concern. You work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe and families are well supported. Where there have been concerns, you have been tenacious in following these through.

Pre-employment checks on staff and records are kept to ensure that all adults are suitable to work with children. You take all aspects of health and safety seriously and there is good provision for pupils who have medical needs. Governors make

regular checks on all aspects of safeguarding and health and safety. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and staff agree that children are safe.

Inspection findings

- To determine whether the school remained good, I followed three key lines of enquiry during the inspection. These were based on the school's last inspection report, its recent performance information and an analysis of the school's website. My first line of enquiry was to ascertain what action leaders are taking to improve the progress that pupils make between key stages 1 and 2 in writing. This was because in 2017, pupils made less progress than pupils nationally and did less well compared to other subjects.
- Your current assessment information and work in pupils' books show that most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are now making strong progress in writing. Pupils' independent writing books show excellent progress in most classes. In upper key stage 2, where pupils benefit from an additional teacher, progress is rapid. This year's assessments show significant improvement in writing compared to last year.
- You provide pupils with many opportunities to undertake extended writing tasks across the curriculum. Pupils are expected to build on their strong knowledge of grammar and punctuation. In the past, spelling was identified as a stumbling block for some pupils. A more rigorous approach to learning spellings and to pupils correcting their own spelling in their work has led to significant improvement.
- You have introduced successfully a programme to generate ideas and develop pupils' oracy skills, and improve their ability to express viewpoints and consider complex ideas. Your leader of English has introduced a number of initiatives, such as 'word of the week', which aim to enhance pupils' vocabulary. Enrichment activities are used well to enable pupils to draw on their experiences and produce interesting and lively written work. The standard of handwriting is generally good.
- My second line of enquiry investigated the progress you have made in resolving the issue raised in the last Ofsted report to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Results in 2017 saw a sharp improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Your current assessment information also shows strong progress for these pupils across year groups and subjects.
- Leaders and teachers monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils very closely. They provide additional, bespoke support for pupils who need it. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well. You have implemented specific programmes to raise the aspirations of the most able disadvantaged pupils. This is leading to improvement. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about participating in the programme to promote their reading.
- Leaders place a high priority on improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. For example, disadvantaged pupils are encouraged to attend a breakfast club to improve their attendance and punctuality. Overall attendance is currently

above average. The school's home-school support officer works closely with families, many of whom expressed their appreciation of this additional support.

- Leaders track the progress of disadvantaged pupils closely. An additional teacher provided in key stage 2 provides further support for disadvantaged pupils in small groups and for individual pupils. Teachers also prioritise disadvantaged pupils by ensuring that their work is always looked at first. Teachers' assessments of these pupils show that this personalised and timely approach has had a great impact on outcomes this year. Disadvantaged pupils are now making strong progress in all years and all subjects.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to improve the reading skills of disadvantaged pupils. This has generated great enthusiasm among pupils and is showing a good impact. In 2017, more disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in reading than all pupils nationally. Your records show that this is set to improve further this year, particularly the proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining a higher standard in reading.
- My final line of enquiry was to investigate provision in science. In 2017, outcomes in science in key stages 1 and 2 were lower than those in reading, writing and mathematics. The science leader has begun to lead improvements. Schemes of work have been rewritten this year with the help of a specialist consultant. Subject knowledge of teachers has improved and lessons are well planned and engaging. There is now a strong focus on developing pupils' practical enquiry and scientific method.
- The profile of science has been raised through events such as 'The Mad Scientist' and a science week. Many topics make links to science. For example, during the inspection, pupils in English wrote about a leading female scientist, challenging traditional images of science. I observed excited pupils constructing pillars for a Greek temple, hypothesising which design was structurally strongest based on the materials used, discussing the shapes and forces applied and then testing this fully. Pupils I spoke with said that they particularly enjoy the experiments in their science lessons.
- Work in pupils' science books shows good progress and a thorough coverage of the science curriculum. There is a clear focus on scientific enquiry and subject vocabulary from early years onwards. Current school assessment information suggests that attainment is rising. Key stage 1 assessments this year show that a larger proportion of pupils attained at a greater depth in science. Similar improvements can be seen in other year groups.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the programmes introduced to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils become firmly established, so that a greater proportion of them attain at a higher standard by the end of key stage 2
- actions to raise achievement in science become firmly embedded and enable pupils to attain equally as well in science as they do in other subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Sutton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders, support staff, parents, governors and pupils, and spoke with your school improvement partner by phone.
- I visited all classrooms and looked at pupils' work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in the playground.
- I reviewed the school's website and documents, including curriculum plans, the single central record of employment checks, child protection systems, the school's self-evaluation and external evaluations, improvement plans, management monitoring information, pupils' assessments and progress information.
- I also took account of 216 responses from parents and 24 responses from staff to Ofsted's online questionnaires, as well as 69 comments from parents by text and one phone call from a parent.