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Mrs Tracy Morgan
Headteacher
Mill Hill Primary School
Mill Road
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Dear Mrs Morgan

Short inspection of Mill Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 January 2019, 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

You became headteacher in April 2018. Other senior leaders are also relatively new in their roles.

Mill Hill is a small, friendly and inclusive school. Very large numbers of pupils join the school in a wide range of year groups throughout the year. For example, in some key stage 2 classes, only a third of the pupils started Mill Hill in the Reception Year. Pupils – including those who have recently joined the school – form positive relationships with adults and peers. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are vulnerable are very well supported to succeed.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school, including the improvements they feel new leaders have made. One comment – typical of the views of many parents – was, 'My son has thrived in this school. He loves coming to school every day.' Almost all staff are fully behind leaders' initiatives to improve the school further. Many staff highlight leaders' consideration of their workload as a positive feature of the school.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the teaching of writing, ensuring that pupils knew what was expected of them. Current pupils are making good progress in writing, including those who are working to catch up and

the most able writers.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff have been well trained to observe and listen to pupils carefully. As a result, adults make timely and appropriate records of all concerns about pupils' well-being. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs act swiftly when they receive any referrals from staff. Leaders work well with other professionals to help keep pupils safe.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Pupils who have transferred to Mill Hill from other schools say they are quickly made to feel welcome and enjoy school. Staff ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when online.

Inspection findings

- Current key stage 2 pupils make good progress in their writing. Leaders have changed the way that teachers plan learning over time. There is now a much greater focus on developing and increasing pupils' vocabulary in English lessons. As a result, pupils are well supported to enrich and extend their writing. Pupils make strong improvements in their handwriting, spelling, punctuation and use of grammar.
- The plans and provision to support vulnerable pupils are very good. Over time, the number of fixed-term exclusions has declined dramatically. Pupils who have not enjoyed or been successful at other schools do well at Mill Hill. Pupils who have not always been able to manage their emotions are now in class and learning. Staff who work with individual pupils show exceptional levels of respect and warmth. Vulnerable pupils feel safe, happy and ready to learn. Pupils grow in confidence and can talk about the difference that Mill Hill makes to them.
- Leaders' actions have ensured that more pupils come to school regularly. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is decreasing. Vulnerable pupils – including those who are disadvantaged – are no longer significantly over-represented in exclusion figures or absence data.
- Leaders are making improvements to the curriculum. They are highly ambitious for pupils. Leaders and staff have planned a whole cycle of life experiences that pupils will encounter through the curriculum. Pupils talk positively about learning in all subjects and the many trips and visits they go on.
- Leaders have thought carefully about what new learning will be taught over time in all subjects, not just in English and mathematics. Work in books shows that pupils are making good progress in subjects such as history. However, leaders and teachers have not yet thought clearly enough about the subject-specific vocabulary they want pupils to encounter, learn and be able to use with confidence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- planned learning over time in subjects other than English enables pupils to hear, remember and use an even wider range of new words in their speaking and writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Mark Cole
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, senior leaders and governors to review your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I accompanied you to all classes. We evaluated a range of work in pupils' books and I spoke to pupils about their learning and life at Mill Hill. I joined pupils for lunch. I spoke to an adviser from the local authority. I scrutinised 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, free-text comments and letters to me. I reviewed 28 staff and 20 pupil survey returns. I checked the effectiveness of your safeguarding arrangements, including those related to recruitment.