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Mr Stephen Wood
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Wood

Short inspection of Clifford Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team have placed pupils firmly at the heart of all you do. It was clear that you have established a strong, caring and nurturing culture within the school. Parents who responded to Ofsted's free-text service were overwhelmingly supportive of what the school has to offer. One parent commented: 'I have felt this school has encouraged the children to learn to the best of their abilities, and the support they get is tremendous.' Another added: 'I have complete confidence in the care that they provide, which contributes hugely to a positive learning environment. Our children are very happy in school, which is down to the staff and the amazing relationships they build.' These comments were typical of many.

Your nurture and care extend to improving pupils' awareness of their own physical and mental well-being. You employ your own caterers, who cook school meals from home grown produce and work with staff and pupils so that all age groups experience healthy cooking. In addition, the school's enrichment weeks, such as 'well-being week', have successfully heightened the importance of mental well-being among the school community.

Clifford Road is a vibrant school. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude to their education and are sociable, polite and respectful to each other and adults. Leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and are diligent in their vision to further improve leadership throughout the school. For example, you and governors are working closely with the local authority to further

develop middle leadership and new members of the governing body.

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the needs of the pupils who attend the school and an increase in pupil numbers across all year groups, with high numbers of pupils arriving at different times of the school year. Leaders have embraced these changes and longstanding staff have grown with the school, doing all they can to find out the needs of pupils and how best to support them. Pupils who speak English as a second language and those with special educational needs thrive and flourish because of the precise support given by all staff who work with them.

Your school curriculum is truly inspiring. It is rich, varied and stimulating. Across a wide range of subjects, you and your staff ensure that pupils have access to many opportunities where teachers can creatively immerse pupils in exciting topics which they clearly enjoy. I was particularly impressed with the way you have developed and made good use of your very own air-raid shelter that serves as a high-quality museum on the school site. You involve the school community, many of whom have contributed artefacts, to help keep it in exceptionally good condition. The wide range of original pieces engage pupils and enhance their study of World War 2.

Teachers frequently adapt teaching and learning and use their creativity to stimulate pupils to want to learn. For example, in Year 2, the classroom cupboard had been transformed into the South Pole, where children were excitedly clutching snowballs and eager to share their learning about penguins' habitats. Further examples of the well-planned curriculum were evidenced in the school's gallery, where pupils' high-quality art work showed their study of artists such as Georgia O'Keefe, William Morris and Henry Moore. Other displays demonstrated good-quality science teaching and learning. Pupils' work demonstrated that they routinely carry out experiments and record and evaluate their findings. In other instances, the curriculum serves to promote values such as resilience, respect, fairness, honesty and equality. You reflect on the needs of your pupils and adapt the curriculum accordingly. One such example was seen through pupils learning about important women who have led and influenced scientific research, such as Ada Lovelace. Pupils spoken to were articulate, reflective and said that they enjoy all that the school has to offer. They shared their future aspirations, for example to be architects, authors and marine biologists.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have established a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school. Procedures for checking staff suitability to work with children are rigorous and employee files are well organised. All staff understand that safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility. Staff know pupils well and have received the necessary safeguarding training. They know to report any concerns to designated safeguarding leaders, which they do promptly so that the most vulnerable pupils get the right support they need.

There are many examples of good practice where leaders have been quick to

identify pupils and families who are experiencing difficult circumstances. You and your team are extremely vigilant and make yourselves visible at the school gate in the morning so that you can offer immediate support to vulnerable pupils and their families.

Your pupil welfare officer is dedicated and passionate and continues to work with families by getting the support that they need through effective links that she has established with external agencies. This has had a positive impact on improving attendance for many pupils. You and your team are committed to ensuring that pupils attend school all the time. Family learning has been successful in engaging parents to learn with their children, for example through sharing reading activities. There are plans in place to develop this further. Leaders are relentless in this cause. However, for some groups of pupils, absence still remains a concern.

Pupils speak confidently about how to stay safe when using the computer. They have lessons that teach them what not to do and what to do if they are contacted by a stranger. Pupils enjoy their breaktimes. Leaders have thought carefully about how to manage the small outside space for large numbers. On the day of this inspection, ice prevented some of the playground from being used. Pupils adhered to the rules and stayed within the boundaries. Organised games and dance activities kept pupils happily engaged. Teachers and leaders record any incidents of inappropriate behaviour and analyse the results. Evidence shows that a combination of strong behaviour systems and effective intervention, such as a lunchtime club and playground leaders, have reduced incidents of poor behaviour. As a result, pupils rarely get into trouble for the same type of incident twice.

Inspection findings

- Published progress information for pupils at the end of Year 6 has shown a decline in writing progress over the last three years, particularly for the most able pupils. You and your leaders have made writing a priority and have developed a consistent, structured approach to the teaching of writing. This starts in the Nursery, where children explore language and tell stories through mark making and begin to develop an accurate pencil grip. In Reception, children are given many opportunities to practise and develop their writing through well-planned activities that engage and inspire them to want to write.
- In key stage 1, pupils write with confidence and take risks where they learn to extend their sentences and add exciting words. Pupils' books show that in Years 1 and 2 they write well-constructed, interesting sentences, forming their letters with increasing accuracy. Across the school, teachers use whole-class books to ignite pupils' interest and 'drama for writing' to understand the feelings of key characters from the text. Pupils in Year 5 shared their learning from 'Street Child' and told me that they really enjoy the drama activities that help them to write imaginatively.
- The most able pupils are effectively challenged through their individual targets, which helps them to improve their work further. Those spoken with all knew what they needed to do to improve. It was evident that this approach is having a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. Pupils' high-quality writing,

across a range of subjects, decorates the many corridor walls. Your pupils' progress information and pupils' workbooks show that more pupils are on track to reach greater depth in writing across the school.

- In 2018, pupils attained below national averages in mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Although progress was broadly average, attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 had declined too. You explained that you had completely reviewed your approach to the teaching of mathematics as the previous approach was not meeting the needs of your pupils. You had identified that although pupils had developed strong skills in arithmetic, they were not getting the opportunities to problem-solve and use their reasoning skills.
- These opportunities are now an integral feature of your mathematics curriculum. Pupils across the school practise 10 minutes of mathematics a day, and books show that they have many opportunities to test out their problem-solving skills daily. Pupils learn to explain their reasoning by attempting weekly tasks and presenting to the rest of the school. This was observed during the inspection, when Year 4 and Year 6 demonstrated how they had strategically approached a challenging activity in two completely different ways.
- Too few disadvantaged pupils achieved well in the combined reading, writing and mathematics scores at the end of key stage 2. You shared evidence that demonstrated that this was due to the weaknesses identified in pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Current pupils are extremely well supported to attend school and do the best they can. You and your staff make sure that they are encouraged to take part in many extra-curricular activities and receive the right support they need to access their learning. Disadvantaged pupils make overall good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to develop strategies to engage parents so that attendance improves for all groups of pupils
- continue to embed the school's approach for teaching mathematics and writing so that pupils' attainment continues to rise.

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

Yours sincerely

Cindy Impey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited seven classes across the school, along with you and your deputy headteacher, to observe teaching and learning and the behaviour of pupils. I examined work in books and spoke with pupils about their learning. I examined a range of documentation, including safeguarding records, information about pupils' progress, school development plans, leaders' self-evaluations and governors' minutes. Meetings were held with you, senior leaders, your pupil welfare officer and two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I also spoke with five Year 5 pupils, a representative from the local authority and eight members of staff. I considered 25 responses to Ofsted's staff survey, 63 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 38 responses to Ofsted's parents' free-text facility and one response to Ofsted's pupils' survey.