

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



2 April 2019

Mrs Michaela Foley
Headteacher
Chelsfield Primary School
Warren Road
Chelsfield
Orpington
Kent
BR6 6EP

Dear Mrs Foley

Short inspection of Chelsfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You maintain a strong ethos at the school, central to which is a 'can-do' attitude. Leaders make the most of the opportunities provided by the school's small size, while compensating for the challenges that this can bring. Pupils know each other very well and told me that they get on with everyone. Adults also know pupils well, enabling the needs of all pupils to be met. Pupils behave well and appreciate the school's rewards and sanctions system, saying that teachers are fair when dealing with them.

Leaders identify and act upon aspects of the school's work that need further improvement. For example, the recent emphasis on reading has produced excellent outcomes at key stage 2, and the school is working to address the relatively weaker outcomes at key stage 2 in writing.

Leaders understand the benefits and drawbacks of mixed-year groups, and the challenge for new teachers of providing for the diverse academic needs of pupils with a wide age range. Leaders ensure that all staff are inducted quickly into school procedures and have the support of both the school and trust. Pupils told me that they like the challenges posed to them when working with older pupils. Pupils in some year groups have made stronger progress as pupils aspire to emulate their older peers.

Language and communication are central to the school's work. Leaders have

identified pupils in Years 1 and 2 as being in need of support with language development, and separate teaching groups are used to provide this. The school's broader emphasis on the importance of communication was exemplified in the end-of-day assembly, when all pupils and children met together to sing songs and communicate in French and through sign language.

Pupils make strong progress in mathematics as a result of effective teaching. Pupils are encouraged to analyse questions carefully and to use mental mathematics to complete calculations. This has helped pupils develop the skills to be independent, especially when they are stuck on a question. Only when they have exhausted their problem-solving skills do they ask for help.

Governors challenge the school well. They have the skills to ensure that leaders are supported in the work that they do. Recently, the school roll has fallen. Governors have both challenged and supported the school to ensure its long-term stability. Leaders expect pupils to leave the school as confident learners who have gained the necessary skills to manage their own learning. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders are relentless in their work to protect pupils at the school. Senior leaders and governors regularly check that safeguarding procedures are in place and that the highest standards are upheld. Staff responsible for the management of safeguarding records receive regular and relevant training. Recruitment checks are thorough and ensure the suitability of staff to work with pupils at the school.

Pupils told me that they feel protected at school and that they are kept safe by their teachers and school leaders. They have regular fire drills and know the lock-down procedures. They told me that in lessons they are well informed on how to stay safe online. They understand what information is appropriate to share online and what applications they are allowed to use. They also told me that their 'bubbletime' box system, where they can share their worries, works well, and that their concerns are listened to.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed to follow three lines of enquiry. The first was based on pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2, particularly that of middle-prior-attainers. This was chosen because recent outcomes for this group were below those of their peers.
- Leaders have sought to strengthen the progress of pupils in this group through the introduction of a new writing scheme and the associated training of adults. Rich texts and a challenging writing curriculum are now embedded across the school. Leaders' high expectations for this group are shown by the aspirational targets they have set for them.
- Strengths in the teaching of writing include excellent subject knowledge, high

expectations and effective sharing of good practice. For example, the teaching emphasised the need for strong introductions to pupils' writing. Pupils were encouraged to plan dramatic openings, setting the scene for their pieces, or to begin their writing with dialogue to grip the reader.

- The school's actions have had a positive impact on pupils' writing skills. Pupils are confident to work independently and require little input when producing high-quality work. They continually seek to improve their writing. Accurate self-editing was seen in books, making good use of a thesaurus, dictionary or vocabulary list to find suitable synonyms to improve their work. They draw from an extensive 'toolkit' of writing techniques that they have learned to improve their writing. For example, pupils told me that they regularly use alliteration to provide greater emphasis in their writing. Work in books and lessons shows that all pupils are now making stronger progress in writing, but this remains less so for middle-prior-attainers than others.
- The second line of enquiry was to explore children's outcomes in early years. This was chosen because, recently, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in their communication, language and literacy has fallen to below average.
- The school reacted to the fall in outcomes by engaging support for the early years team from the trust. Staff have been working to provide rich opportunities for reading and writing. Effective teaching of phonics supports children's reading and writing. For example, in a science lesson about the lifecycle of a frog, children persevered to read scientific vocabulary before using the words in their writing.
- In lessons, children were helped to begin their writing by sharing the common words they were likely to need. To extend their writing, a well-used blackboard in the playground entitled 'tricky words' was used by children to try out words that they found difficult. A higher proportion of children are now on track to meet the early learning goals.
- The final line of enquiry focused on the quality of pupils' reading. This was chosen because their progress in reading has been consistently strong across the school.
- The pupils who read to me showed strong command of vocabulary. They could explain the context of words and offer an accurate explanation of their meaning and alternatives.
- Pupils read with confidence and enjoy the books on offer at the school. They told me that they learn to read early in their school career, and to a high standard, because of high-quality teaching that concentrates on their phonics, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the reading techniques that they use to understand the meaning of unfamiliar texts. They also told me that they use their reading records to help them review their reading and they like to share these with their parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school continues to provide support to promote children's development in early years
- outcomes in writing for the middle-prior-attaining group in key stage 2 improve further to match those of their peers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and 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

Jason Hughes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I looked at a range of pupils' work together with leaders. Senior leaders accompanied me on visits to classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at their work. I examined a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central register. I scrutinised Ofsted's online survey for parents (46 responses) and associated commentary (41 comments), as well as responses to the staff survey (10 responses). I also spoke to parents at the end of the school day. I spoke with governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I looked at reports from the trust, evaluating the work of the school. I examined the school's website and reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also considered the school's self-evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities and assessment information for current pupils. Finally, I met with representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer and the trust's improvement partner.