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Rachel Semark
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Dear Mrs Semark

Short inspection of The Cranbourne Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in February 2012.

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. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Pupils are a credit to the school. As in the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptional. This has a positive impact on their progress ensuring that pupils achieve well. Pupils fully understand and follow the three school rules, 'ready, respectful and safe'. Attendance is consistently very high because pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. Work is very well presented, and pupils are proud of their achievements. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

As the long-standing headteacher, you have ensured that your enthusiasm and high expectations are shared by all. Staff are proud members of the school and agree the school is well led. They particularly value the importance you place on their well-being. Over time, strong leadership has developed within the school. Research and evidence are used to drive improvements. Leaders have not been complacent in their determination to deliver the school strapline, 'broadening horizons'. They provide all pupils with a range of exciting experiences and opportunities that they might not otherwise get. Recent developments to the curriculum recognise the demographic changes which have taken place in the local area. Leaders ensure that

the curriculum is broad and interesting and effectively gives pupils the knowledge and breadth of understanding they need to succeed.

Leaders have built on the strengths from the previous inspection. Children in the early years benefit from an excellent start to their education. They make very good progress from their low starting points as a result of effective teaching. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is consistently above the national average. Due to the effective teaching in phonics, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is also consistently well above the national average.

Cranbourne Primary School is highly regarded and popular within the local community, as reflected by the high number of applications for school places. The many parents and carers who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are overwhelmingly positive and would recommend the school to other families. Parents say leaders are 'very approachable' and 'passionate about the school'.

Following becoming part of The Hoddesdon School Trust in September 2016, the school has made effective use of the benefits this brings. For example, teachers have been able to share their good practice and complete checks on assessment across the schools which has supported improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The governing body is led by the effective chair of governors. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They hold leaders to account and challenge the school's ongoing improvements effectively.

The previous inspection identified that more opportunities were needed for pupils to apply mathematical skills in other subjects across the curriculum. Leaders check the quality of mathematics teaching to ensure that it effectively provides opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge. For example, a group of girls in Year 6 were very keen to show me an example of artwork in their mathematics books that was produced through completing calculations.

Safeguarding is effective.

At Cranbourne, there is a very strong culture of keeping pupils safe. Leaders, including governors, have relentlessly ensured that safeguarding is a priority of the school and all arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders in charge of safeguarding have a secure oversight of safeguarding throughout the school. All staff undertake relevant training and have access to information weekly, for example, through staff meetings, to ensure that they take responsibility for keeping pupils safe. This communication and training ensures that all staff are up to date with legal requirements and as a result, pupils at Cranbourne are well looked after.

School safeguarding records are detailed and maintained well. They show that leaders persistently follow up concerns in a timely way and involve external agencies to provide appropriate advice and support. Leaders are very aware of pupils' personal, academic and emotional needs. Parents appreciate the support,

care and guidance that you and staff provide for their families, for example, staff are 'willing to go the extra mile' and they have 'moved mountains to provide exceptional care'.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know they have adults in school who will listen and help. Pupils can define bullying accurately and state that it rarely happens in the school. E-safety is promoted well throughout the school, which ensures that pupils know how to stay safe online. Pupils show they understand how to keep safe. They can explain, following lessons and specific activities, such as cycling training and crossing the road safely, how to stay safe in different situations.

Inspection findings

- To confirm the school remains good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about how leaders have improved pupil outcomes in English, particularly to increase the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth and/or the higher standard in reading at key stage 2. This was because, in 2017 and 2018, too few pupils made good enough progress to reach greater depth and/or the higher standard from their starting points at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Leaders have put in place improvements to the teaching, learning and assessment of reading and writing across the school. Starting with reading, leaders introduced a range of strategies in key stage 2, for example, the school's chosen approach of whole-class teaching of reading, using a broader range of challenging, high-quality texts and asking higher-level questions. As a result, in 2018, reading at the higher standard was above the national average at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders have recently developed a comprehensive programme for teaching spelling in key stage 2 as this was identified as a barrier to pupils reaching greater depth in writing. Books show spelling has greatly improved as a result. Pupils say that the new 'try it' books have helped to improve their spelling as they can write different versions 'to see if it looks right'.
- Leaders check the quality of English teaching to ensure that it is consistently effective and check pupils' progress to ensure that they are doing well from their starting points. Consequently, the school's current information about pupils' progress shows that more pupils are on track to reach greater depth and/or the higher standard in English in key stage 1 and 2.
- My second line of enquiry was about how leaders have improved outcomes in mathematics at greater depth, particularly for girls. This was because in 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils in key stage 1 and 2 achieving greater depth and/or the higher standard was below average. In particular, girls generally achieve less well at greater depth and/or the higher standard in mathematics.
- Leaders met with girls in order to gain their views about mathematics. As a result, they found that as girls got older, they have less confidence in mathematics, particularly with fluency of number facts. A range of chosen strategies, such as daily fluency sessions to practise number facts and 'rock star' times table practice has successfully supported girls to gain confidence.

- Documents to support teachers' planning have been introduced, for example the calculations policy, so that teachers can deliver consistent, logically sequenced programmes of learning through a wide range of activities. There are more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills to a higher level. Monitoring demonstrates that consistent mathematical language is used across the school and 'speaking frames', which have example sentence starters, have helped to structure pupils' thinking when talking about mathematics. During the inspection, girls in Year 5, confidently used pictorial representations and applied number fact knowledge in order to solve a complex problem.
- While the school's current information about pupils' progress from starting points, shows more pupils are on track to achieve greater depth and/or the higher standard in mathematics in key stage 1 and 2, this is not consistently so for the girls.
- My third line of enquiry focused on how effectively leaders have improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Historically, disadvantaged pupils' achievements have been strong. Due to the small numbers of pupils in each year group, the published results fluctuate year on year. Even so, in 2018, there was a decline in disadvantaged pupils' achievements in both key stage 1 and 2.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the barriers to learning disadvantaged pupils face. Using this information, leaders plan support that is well suited to enable disadvantaged pupils to catch up quickly. This includes extra support within the classroom with an additional teacher, small-group intervention work to overcome barriers and counselling to help pupils in need of emotional support. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about participating in the online maths tutoring programme, which helped them to understand concepts they found tricky. As a result of the additional support, current disadvantaged pupils are achieving well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they increase the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth and/or the higher standard in reading and writing from their varying starting points
- more pupils, particularly girls, achieve greater depth and/or the higher standard in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Rachel Welch
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss progress since the previous inspection and to agree the key lines of enquiry. I also met with the executive headteacher, a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body, the more able pupils in Year 2 and 6 and those eligible for pupil premium funding. I spoke to the English, mathematics and curriculum leader and the leader with responsibility for disadvantaged pupils. I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your self-evaluation, plans for improvement, and assessment information. I examined the school's safeguarding procedures, child protection documentation and procedures and information about pupils' behaviour and attendance. We visited classrooms and looked at books. I also looked at 118 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 41 staff survey responses.