

25 June 2019

Mr Denis Foster
Headteacher
Guillemont Junior School
Sandy Lane
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 9ES

Dear Mr Foster

Short inspection of Guillemont Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 21 May 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 2015.

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.

You know the school very well and lead it with a clear sense of purpose and passion. You inspire other leaders and teachers to have high expectations of themselves and of the pupils. Leaders share best practice to ensure high-quality teaching in every class. Together, you have acted to ensure that there is consistency in the approach to teaching and learning across the school. This has involved both focused professional development for all staff and ensuring that you put the pupils at the heart of all that you do. As a consequence of whole-school strategies to drive improvements, teaching is strong, and the quality of the work produced by pupils is impressive.

You have created an environment that is exciting and fun. Pupils have access to a wide range of interesting learning experiences. For example, pupils learn to ride unicycles, and they enjoy the pet corner with guinea pigs, rabbits and birds in the courtyard aviary. They are proud of their new outdoor classroom, which is used by the school and the local community. The school is enhanced by its inclusive nature, and the speech, language and communication resource, which is integral to the school's success. You are currently in the process of developing your curriculum further around your own well-thought-out 'project-based learning' approach, and this will continue to be a focus for the school.

Pupils enjoy school. They have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. One said: 'Teaching is very good. They manage to get the learning done whilst making it fun.' Pupils feel challenged and enjoy the freedom they have when choosing a range of learning tasks. Pupils are kind to each other. They are polite and friendly. Outside in the playground, there is a very positive atmosphere; pupils play purposefully together, laughing together. They rise admirably to fulfil responsibilities such as that of 'peer mediator', trained to deal with any issues if they arise. Behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary.

Parents were extremely positive about the school, both in their responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and when I spoke to them in the playground. All reported that they are pleased with the quality of teaching, the progress their children make, and how safe they feel their children are at school. Parents state that their children are thriving at Guillemont Junior, with one saying: 'My child loves the school. The atmosphere is very welcoming; the activities are very engaging – sports, music, pets' corner and camping... The teachers are very caring and approachable.'

Governors make a significant contribution to the strong leadership of the school. They know the school well, and they are highly skilled and well informed about all aspects of school life. They use a wide range of achievement information, reports and visits to check the school's effectiveness carefully. Governors check diligently how well leaders are tackling the school's current priorities. As a result, the challenge and support they provide for school leaders is highly effective and the school has improved greatly. As one governor remarked, 'We are a school that is always on the move... always wanting to improve.'

During the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that pupils demonstrate a depth of understanding, and that sufficient advice is provided to help lower-attaining pupils. Teachers now consistently ask probing questions and challenge pupils to explain their learning at a greater depth. Less-able pupils' workbooks show that pupils are being well supported by receiving clear advice and focused, structured support. As a result, pupils from different starting points now make excellent progress.

You were also asked to accelerate progress in writing and to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities gain good skills in handwriting and spelling. School information, together with evidence I gained during the inspection, indicates that pupils' progress in writing has accelerated greatly since the last inspection. Pupils' workbooks show that handwriting and spelling skills have developed extremely well.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are robust, and that the school site is safe and secure for your pupils. Staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and are fully trained in identifying anything that may be of

concern. There is robust induction to ensure that all new staff are up to date in this crucial area.

Pupils say they feel very safe and are well cared for in school. They feel confident that adults will help them if needed. They have a clear understanding of how to stay safe, both in the real world and when online.

You have developed a strong safeguarding culture across the school by investing in pastoral and emotional support for pupils and their families. Through weekly staff meetings, vulnerable pupils are identified, and appropriate actions are agreed. Because of this, pupils get the support they need.

Inspection findings

- I examined how well writing has been developed since the last inspection. In the past, although improving, pupils' progress in writing has not been as strong as that seen in reading and mathematics. Your school's detailed improvement plan has writing as a key priority, and many initiatives have been put in place to improve pupils' writing outcomes. You have ensured that pupils have access to a range of high-quality texts and that vocabulary used across the school is ambitious. You have focused on developing pupils' editing skills by introducing 'editing stations'. Due to this whole-school focus, pupils now make excellent progress in writing and have secure spelling strategies at their disposal.
- Teachers' professional development is at the heart of your writing strategy. Regular and focused training opportunities support staff in planning more challenging work for pupils and ensuring that assessment processes are rigorous. These actions have been very successful. Consequently, pupils' achievement in writing is high, and attainment is well above national levels.
- Secondly, I reviewed what the school has done to improve the progress of less-able learners. Much has been done in this area. The school's 'bronze, silver, gold' approach to vocabulary is effective in ensuring pupils' improved understanding of key words across the curriculum. In writing, pupils are successfully helped to write more complex sentences. Because of the school's work in this area, less-able pupils progress exceptionally well.
- Finally, I considered the attendance of pupils. In 2017/18, pupil attendance at Guillemont Junior was below the national average. Attendance information is now monitored on a very regular basis and systems are in place to enable teaching staff to ensure that trends are quickly identified. This intensified focus on pupils' attendance has been very effective, and overall attendance is now above the national average. Although the very small number of pupils who are persistently absent (attendance below 90%) has also improved, it continues to be a focus for the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new approach to the wider curriculum (subjects other than English and mathematics) continues to be embedded so that pupils make even stronger progress in these subjects
- attendance continues to improve, especially for pupils who persistently do not attend school.

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

Felix Rayner

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your senior leadership team, subject leaders, and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with other pupils during the day. I took note of 29 responses from Parent View and 13 free-text comments that were received. I spoke to parents after the school day. I also took account of 20 responses from the pupil questionnaire. I observed teaching and learning, both alone, and either jointly with yourself or the deputy headteacher. I looked at pupils' work in their classrooms and considered the progress evident in a selection of pupils' workbooks. I scrutinised school documents, including the child protection and safeguarding records, the school's improvement plan and the self-evaluation document.