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Mrs Louisa Hillman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hillman

Short inspection of Ide Hill Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 April 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 lead the school with passion and determination and are fully committed to improving the provision further. Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's many strengths and are sharply focused on the priorities for improvement.

Ide Hill Church of England Primary is a friendly, inclusive community. Parents speak highly of the school. They value the varied opportunities and wide range of support the school has to offer. As one parent stated: 'Ide Hill is an extremely nurturing school with an ethos on striving to do your best.' Pupils say that it is a happy, friendly place and that they enjoy coming to school. Consequently, pupils are thriving.

At the time of the previous inspection you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in mathematics and technology and the presentation of pupils' work. You have taken effective action to address these aspects. You have set high expectations for all pupils and are ambitious for what they can achieve. There is a positive climate for learning throughout the school. Pupils enjoy learning and demonstrate enthusiastic attitudes to their work. They work hard, showing high levels of concentration and a commitment to their own learning. Pupils take great pride in their work, ensuring that it is presented to a high standard.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years, making strong progress from

their starting points. This is because teachers have created a stimulating learning environment with carefully planned activities that enable children to practise and develop a wide range of skills. Consequently, over the past three years, the proportions of children who have reached a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year have been consistently above national averages.

Throughout key stages 1 and 2, pupils continue to learn well. Consistently good teaching enables pupils to make strong progress. In 2018, the proportions of pupils who attained the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 were greater than in the previous year, and above the national averages. In 2018, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was broadly in line with the national averages. However, the proportions of pupils who reached the expected standard and the higher standard in the reading, writing and mathematics combined measure have exceeded the national averages for the past three years.

Safeguarding is effective.

Throughout the school there is a strong culture of safeguarding, in which pupils' welfare is paramount. You have worked closely with your governors and the school's team of designated safeguarding leads to establish robust policies and procedures. Furthermore, you have ensured that all staff and governors are suitably trained. As a result, they have a good understanding of their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe from harm.

You ensure that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For instance, regular, thorough teaching about keeping safe online means that pupils are knowledgeable about this aspect of personal safety. Pupils were able to offer me a wide range of advice for staying safe online, for example the importance of not sharing my personal information. The school's work on anti-bullying is very effective. Pupils have great confidence in the school's 'anti-bullying ambassadors'. These ambassadors respond to any worries that pupils post in the school's 'worry boxes'. This work, coupled with the effective support provided by adults in school, means that pupils feel safe in school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on key aspects of the school's work. In addition to inspecting the effectiveness of safeguarding, we looked at the following: the teaching of mathematics; the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); and the school's curriculum.
- You and your senior leaders have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. Teachers explain concepts clearly, using accurate mathematical vocabulary. They provide a wide range of challenging, practical activities that enable pupils to investigate and explore their understanding. Pupils are able to use and apply their knowledge to reason and solve problems, using mathematical vocabulary accurately and with confidence to

explain their understanding. Consequently, pupils develop a secure understanding of mathematical concepts and make strong progress from their different starting points.

- Pupils work collaboratively with their peers, offering one another support and challenge. Together, they discuss their mathematical thinking and this deepens their understanding further. For example, pupils in Year 6 shared the different methods they had used to solve challenging problems involving percentages of numbers. By considering each other's approaches to the problem, pupils were able to check their own understanding and accuracy of the solutions they had reached.
- Leaders make effective use of additional funding to carefully plan a wide range of interventions to support pupils' learning. These, together with effective teaching across the school, mean that pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are well supported. These groups of pupils engage fully in their learning tasks, work collaboratively with their peers and are keen to share their learning. As a result, they make strong progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They plan interesting activities that engage pupils in their learning and enable them to develop and improve their knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. Teachers model skills effectively and pupils respond positively, working diligently to develop their own. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum, writing for a variety of purposes and genres in the different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 have written biographies about important historical figures.
- You also provide a wide range of enrichment opportunities to enhance the school's curriculum. For example, teachers have made use of virtual-reality headsets to enable pupils to explore foreign landscapes. Pupils have also been given the opportunity to participate in forensic-science workshops.
- While there are many strengths in teaching across the wider curriculum, you have rightly identified that this is an area for further development to ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects are embedded and deepened.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's curriculum is further developed so that pupils build on their prior learning to embed and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Leah Goulding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation and pupils' attainment and progress. In addition, I met with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese. Together with you and your SENCo, I visited the majority of classes to observe pupils learning, speaking to pupils about their work. Alongside your mathematics leader, I also looked at work in pupils' books. During breaktime, I spoke informally with pupils to explore their views on the school.

The school's safeguarding arrangements were scrutinised, including the single central record of recruitment and background checks on adults in school. I spoke to parents at the end of the school day and also took account of 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 19 free-text comments. The six responses to the Ofsted staff survey were also considered.