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Mrs Karen Hadley
Headteacher
Clyst Heath Nursery and Community Primary School
Royal Crescent
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Dear Mrs Hadley

Short inspection of Clyst Heath Nursery and Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. As pupil numbers have increased, you have sustained a sharp focus on delivering the best possible education for all. You have strengthened the leadership team and this has enabled whole-school strategies to be introduced speedily to help pupils to achieve well. By working in teams, teachers are able to share best practice. Together, they seek to identify any difficulties that may be slowing pupils' learning and take action to overcome them. You and the leadership team recognise that this way of working could be refined further so that any slowing of pupils' progress is recognised and tackled even more quickly.

You have supported pupils to understand how they can help themselves to learn by being 'ready, willing and able – in ourselves, in our school and in our world'. They know that to be ready requires them to be curious, confident and open to challenge. To be willing, they need to be self-disciplined and resilient; and, to be able, they are required to reflect, predict and explain. These expectations are modelled well by you, the leadership team, staff and governors and make a significant contribution to pupils' positive attitudes to learning in lessons. 'Teachers support us in all our learning and make sure we can do our best' was typical of the views expressed by pupils. You have high aspirations for pupils and staff. 'Aim high, achieve the best', is a goal that is communicated clearly and threaded through the school plans for improvement.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement raised at the previous inspection. You and your staff have developed better procedures for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers are provided with clear information about what pupils know and understand, and very specifically what they need to learn next. The effectiveness of teaching and the speed at which pupils make progress is improving as a result. You are continuing to refine these procedures to make sure that the progress made by all pupils is as rapid as it can be.

Thorough school procedures are being introduced to keep parents informed about their child's learning, and the progress they are making. These take account of pupils' age, their prior learning and the changes introduced nationally in assessment and reporting requirements since the previous inspection. Most parents report that they are happy with the information they receive, and are confident that if they have concerns, they are able to communicate with the school directly. A few parents, however, report that they would like more detailed and frequent information.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You are meticulous in ensuring that policies and practice keep abreast of recent legislation. Staff receive regular training so that they remain vigilant, and mindful of potential dangers to pupils. Your close links with other professionals, and tight recording of any action taken, ensure that pupils and their families receive timely support and guidance. Referrals for more specialist support are managed very well. Records are well organised, detailed and of high quality.

You and your staff invest significant time in supporting pupils' social and emotional development. Pupils are helped to develop strategies to manage their own behaviour. This allows them to develop trusting relationships and to progress well with their learning. You have cultivated a strong sense of belonging in the school. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and would talk to an adult if they have a concern. Parents recognise the community, 'family feel', within the school and are confident that their children are safe and well looked after. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe, including when using modern technology. Pupils report that most pupils behave well and that the very few incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately by staff. Pupils' typically good attendance reflects their enjoyment of school.

Inspection findings

- The progress made by pupils through key stage 2 and the standard they have achieved in reading, writing and mathematics have been variable over the past three years. We agreed to explore the reasons for this. In 2017, the standards in each subject were higher than in 2016.
- Assessment information held by the school and pupils' work show that those with low prior attainment typically made good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress was not enough,

however, to enable them to achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 6. A few pupils whose prior attainment fell within the middle or high prior attainment band did not achieve the expected or higher standard in reading and mathematics in the national tests. However, in the months prior to national testing, the work produced by these pupils was consistently of the expected or higher standard. Improving pupils' resilience so that they are able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a variety of situations continues to be a focus for you and your staff.

- We next agreed to check on the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Records show that typically these pupils make good progress from their sometimes very low starting points. Targeted support to tackle very specific aspects such as calculation in mathematics, and understanding of text when reading, is often particularly effective. You keep a close check on the difference this support is making and modify it quickly if it is not working well enough. Pupils respond particularly well to this bespoke approach and engage very positively in their learning in lessons.
- You and your leadership team are tightly focused on ensuring that teaching drives pupils' progress forwards rapidly. Training has ensured that teachers fully understand the assessment information for their class. They make good use of assessment information to identify precisely what pupils need to learn next, and to identify targets for their future success. 'Where have pupils come from and where are they going to?' is the main consideration for staff. Pupils' progress in all year groups improved last year as a consequence of this approach, with more pupils securing the expected or higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are confident that their teachers help them to learn well.
- Alongside the better use of assessment information, an improved curriculum is helping pupils in all year groups to see the relevance of their learning. Care is taken to ensure that in mathematics pupils are confident when working with numbers and have the strategies to check their calculations are accurate. They are keen to apply what they know about numbers when solving problems and tackle the challenges they are set with enthusiasm. Reading and writing are promoted well through other subjects. For example, as part of their history studies, pupils in Years 5 and 6 write newspaper reports about the Vikings invading Exeter. They identify clearly what makes an eye-catching report, and how the use of language can engage the reader. Throughout the school, pupils show high levels of commitment in lessons. They listen respectfully to adults and each other, and respond positively to any advice and guidance they are given.
- Finally, we agreed to explore why, in early years and key stage 1, pupils' performance has been strong for some years. The wide variety of activities inside and outdoors captures pupils' imagination and so engages them in learning. You have encouraged staff to focus on developing pupils' communication and language skills, and their understanding of phonics and numbers. This has helped pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff understand the small steps that pupils need to make in their learning and activities have a clear focus to help them to make these gains quickly. The whole-school focus on making best use of assessment information to guide planning has encouraged staff to refine their approach further. There is a sharp

focus on identifying any pupil whose progress slows and activities are modified to help them to catch up quickly. The richness of the provision in these classes ensures that pupils have many opportunities to practise and consolidate what they have learned, and the skills they have developed. As a result, pupils are confident and show good levels of resilience when experiencing new and challenging tasks.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in all year groups, teachers make the best use of accurate assessment information to identify any pupil whose progress slows, and that prompt action is taken to help them catch up quickly.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your deputy. Two governors, including the chair of the governing body, met with me to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection and their aspirations for the school's future. I conducted a telephone call with a representative of the local authority. The views of a number of parents were gathered as they dropped their children off at the start of the school day. Further responses, made through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were also considered. Responses to the staff and pupil questionnaire were also taken into account. I visited the classrooms jointly with you and your deputy to observe lessons. We also looked at samples of pupils' written and mathematics work and information about their progress. I spoke to pupils during lessons, at playtime and lunchtime. I considered a number of school documents including your self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. I evaluated a range of documents and records relating to safeguarding, including the vetting and recruitment of staff.