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Mrs Suzanne Summerhayes and Mrs Sharon Maguire
Interim and Acting Headteachers
Studlands Rise First School
Studlands Rise
Royston
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SG8 9HB

Dear Mrs Summerhayes and Mrs Maguire

Short inspection of Studlands Rise First School

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 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 January 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have ensured that there has been a continued drive for improvement during the substantive headteacher's maternity leave. Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and ensure that pupils make good progress towards the school's aims of developing 'a love of learning that will last them a lifetime'.

Parents and carers value the school highly. As one parent commented, 'Studlands Rise balances brilliantly that of a family environment, mixed with high standards whilst focusing on developing and supporting each child's individual needs and strengths.' Almost all of the parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school and said that it was well led and managed. All of the pupils I met said that they enjoy school and were keen to tell me about their learning.

Leaders and governors know the school well. Self-evaluation is accurate and you have identified appropriate areas for improvement. You are ambitious for the pupils and are providing them with a broad and interesting curriculum which is enhanced with educational visits. Year 1 pupils talked enthusiastically about their walk around Royston. They showed me how this resulted in the production of maps to show their route and how they used symbols to indicate the buildings they had seen. Pupils enjoy themed activities such as 'Science Week', where the whole school completes experiments. A Year 2 pupil enthusiastically told me about his experiment and explained that he was doing chromatography to separate the different colours in ink.

Leaders ensure that children have a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children typically enter the school with skills that are average or high for their age. They make strong progress and the proportion attaining a good level of development is consistently above the national average. In key stage 1, pupils continue to make strong progress. Almost all pupils pass the phonics screening check each year. Reading and writing standards at the end of Year 2 have been above the national average in each year since the last inspection. The small numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and make strong progress from their starting points.

Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to help children to explain their understanding or spot their errors. The supportive environment ensures that pupils, of all abilities, are well supported and are happy to learn from their mistakes. Adults encourage pupils to learn and use a broad vocabulary and this is enabling them to describe their learning confidently. For example, a Reception child explained the importance of a mini-beast's home being camouflaged to keep it safe.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They work hard in lessons, cooperate when solving problems in groups and are respectful towards each other and adults. Staff and pupils have positive relationships which are valued by pupils and their parents alike.

At the previous inspection, leaders were tasked with monitoring pupils' learning more closely so that they could identify where progress needs to be improved. In mathematics, work to improve pupils' fluency when calculating has been successful. In English, leaders have ensured that high standards are achieved in reading and writing in each cohort. Regular monitoring of subjects other than English and mathematics is completed effectively and leaders of these foundation subjects know where there are strengths and what needs to be improved.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that safeguarding is fit for purpose. Governors and staff receive training to ensure that they have an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding issues. Staff know what to do if they have concerns about a child. You regularly discuss safeguarding at staff meetings so that it maintains a high profile.

Records of concern are well organised and take into account information about pupils' attendance and behaviour. You monitor children carefully and work with outside agencies to keep them safe.

All of the required checks are made on the suitability of adults to work in school. Governors check that safeguarding is effective through their visits to the school and discussions in governing body meetings.

Pupils of all ages told me that they feel safe at school, and parents agree. Pupils showed me the safety rules attached to each tablet which provides them with a constant reminder about how to stay safe when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed that I would look at how effectively leaders are ensuring that the high standards achieved in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 are maintained in key stage 2. We also agreed that I would consider how well pupils are prepared for the transfer to middle school at the end of Year 4.
- Leaders use assessment information and regular reviews of pupils' work to check the progress pupils make in English and mathematics. Pupils' workbooks in Year 3 and Year 4 show that pupils make strong progress. In writing, pupils are increasingly using varied vocabulary and punctuation to add interest for the reader. They write to a high standard in a range of genres. In mathematics, teachers encourage pupils to make links between their knowledge of number facts and this helps them to solve problems confidently.
- Transition arrangements are effective. Year 4 pupils are able to visit their next school and meet their future teachers. Leaders from each school meet regularly. They discuss the needs of pupils, including those with SEND, and provide extra support for those who would find transition difficult.
- The final area that we agreed I would look at is how leaders ensure that pupils make strong progress across the curriculum. This is because variations in the quality of learning across the curriculum were identified at the previous inspection and it is a priority in your school development plan.
- Discussions with pupils and evidence in pupils' workbooks show that the curriculum provided for pupils is broad. Pupils have opportunities to complete learning in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils can talk about their knowledge of world religions or the artists that they have studied. In science, pupils complete regular investigations and use their findings to complete tasks. For example, Year 3 pupils explored what happens when they mixed materials to find out which combination would best represent an eruption when making a model of a volcano. However, pupils also said that their opportunities to learn in some subjects were too varied. In some classes, access to art, music and design and technology is less frequent than in other subjects.
- Foundation subject leaders are monitoring their subjects. They provide feedback to staff about things they are doing well and improvements that need to be made to teaching.
- Pupils' workbooks show that work is not always produced to the same high standard seen in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils' progress is not always as fast as it could be.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve so that they make strong progress in all curriculum subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Keith Pullen
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We agreed the lines of enquiry for this inspection. We discussed the school's internal evaluation of its performance and plans for future improvement. Meetings were held with you and your governors and a representative from the local authority. I also met with subject leaders of core and foundation subjects.

I gathered a range of evidence to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included joint observations of teaching and learning in all classes with both of you. We looked at a sample of pupils' current work across all subjects and across a wide range of abilities. I spoke informally to several pupils in classrooms about their learning and met more formally with a group of pupils to talk about their school experience and their workbooks.

A discussion was held with the acting headteacher as the school's designated safeguarding lead. I met with the member of staff who completes the administration for checking staff's and visitors' suitability to work with pupils. Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff and records relating to referrals made to external agencies.

The views of 95 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered, including 66 free-text comments.