

26 March 2018

Mr Richard Roberts
Headteacher
Arunside School
Blackbridge Lane
Horsham
West Sussex
RH12 1RR

Dear Mr Roberts

Short inspection of Arunside School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 2018, 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 November 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your team have secured substantial improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour since your appointment in January 2017. Together, you have established a calm, hard-working and friendly atmosphere in the school.

You have reviewed and updated the school's rules and values, and have increased teachers' expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well. They enjoy school and are keen to 'be the best they can be' – one of the school's aims. Parents recognise marked improvements in pupils' behaviour since you were appointed as headteacher.

Teachers take great care to make sure that their classrooms are attractive, well organised and purposeful. This sets the positive tone for learning that is evident throughout the school. Pupils access equipment and resources quickly during lessons, and concentrate well.

Notable improvements in the quality of teaching during early years and key stage 1 in the past year have resulted in a dramatic increase in pupils' outcomes at the end of Reception Year and Year 2, effectively reversing a marked decline in standards at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. Rising standards ensure that pupils are increasingly well prepared for learning in the next stages of their education. Effective teaching

during key stage 2 builds well on pupils' higher starting points. Consequently, standards continue to rise in all year groups.

Strong teamwork underpins the school's success since your appointment. Staff and governors work effectively together to improve the school's work. You are exceptionally well supported by your team of senior leaders, who share your high aspirations for the school and its pupils. They speak with clarity and honesty about both the school's performance and those aspects which need further development.

You were understandably disappointed with outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Since then, you have focused on securing the same impressive improvements in pupils' learning during key stage 2 as seen during the early years and key stage 1 last year. You now have a consistent and effective whole-school approach to the teaching of English and mathematics so that pupils make stronger progress than in previous years. Good-quality training has strengthened teachers' subject knowledge and has increased the accuracy of their assessments. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 are making much better progress than before, and standards are rising rapidly across the school. You and your team continue to focus on increasing pupils' attendance and on improving outcomes at the end of key stage 2, particularly for the most able in all subjects and for disadvantaged pupils in reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team give pupils' safety an appropriately high priority. You have improved safeguarding procedures considerably since your appointment. As a result, procedures to keep pupils safe are more rigorous and effective. You and your leaders continuously review and improve safeguarding procedures in the light of both the safeguarding audit and national developments. Your bursar makes sure that recruitment and safeguarding checks are completed promptly and fully to secure pupils' safety and well-being.

You respond quickly and proportionately to any safeguarding concerns. You and your special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) have improved links with agencies and with the local authority early-help team. As a result, staff and parents can access specialist advice and support more quickly than before. You make good use of training to ensure that staff are confident about what to do if they have any worries about pupils' safety.

Strong and respectful relationships between adults and pupils ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. For example, one pupil said: 'I like the fact that teachers are so supportive. I know that I can always go to speak to them and that they will look after me.'

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on how well teaching during key stage 2 contributes to pupils' learning in reading and mathematics, particularly for

disadvantaged pupils and for the most able, and on how effectively leaders support pupils' attendance.

- Leaders have established a consistent and effective approach to teaching reading and mathematics throughout the school. They have used training well to strengthen teachers' understanding of how to teach pupils of different abilities. The work in pupils' books illustrates the substantial improvements made in the teaching of reading and mathematics during the past year so that pupils make strong progress in these subjects.
- The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check are consistently higher than the national average so that pupils are well prepared with fundamental reading strategies. The proportions of pupils achieving expected standards in reading at the end of Year 2 increased in 2017 and were in line with the national average.
- Continuous improvements in the quality of pupils' work in reading and in mathematics during the past year have ensured that standards continue to rise across the school. Historic weaknesses in teaching mean that some of the older pupils have gaps in their English and mathematical knowledge which are hindering their progress. However, highly effective teaching means that these pupils are catching up rapidly with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders have overhauled the use of pupil premium funding in the past couple of years. The deputy headteacher provides strong leadership for disadvantaged pupils' learning. She and the SENCo make sure that teachers give disadvantaged pupils' achievement a high priority and check pupils' progress rigorously. They work very effectively with teachers to ensure that disadvantaged pupils of all abilities are supported well.
- Marked improvements in the quality of teaching in English and mathematics mean that disadvantaged pupils learn increasingly well. However, while the differences between disadvantaged pupils' outcomes and those of other pupils are rapidly diminishing in mathematics, the gaps in reading are narrowing more slowly. Leaders know that disadvantaged pupils need to make even better progress in reading if pupils are to achieve standards in reading which are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders have increased teachers' expectations of pupils' learning in recent years. As a result, teachers set increasingly challenging work for pupils of all abilities, including the most able pupils. In the past year, for example, teachers have given pupils more opportunities to use reasoning skills to solve number problems in mathematics lessons, so that pupils have to think carefully about how to use their mathematical learning. Meanwhile, improvements in the teaching of reading have ensured that pupils develop a deeper understanding of texts. However, leaders recognise that, while the quality of work completed by the most able pupils across the curriculum has improved considerably in the past year, further improvements in teaching are needed to sustain and build on these developments in a range of subjects.
- Pupils' attendance has been lower than national averages for some time and is a current focus for development in the school. Leaders are determined to make sure that all pupils attend as regularly as possible. They have already secured improvements in the quality of support for pupils and their families during the

past year, with some notable successes in improving individual pupils' attendance. For example, leaders have established more robust procedures for checking pupils' attendance on a daily basis, as well as over longer periods of time. They have increased links with parents and have made changes to the school's organisation to make it easier for parents to drop their children off at the start of the school day.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching consistently challenges and extends learning for the most able pupils
- disadvantaged pupils make better progress in reading
- pupils attend regularly enough to achieve well.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited all classrooms with your deputy headteacher during the inspection. I looked at the work in pupils' workbooks during my visits to the classrooms, as well as looking separately at a sample of pupils' work. I talked with pupils during my visits to the classrooms and during the lunchtime break.

I met with your deputy headteacher, your SENCo and your bursar. I also met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a local authority representative.

I took account of 104 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 34 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire. I reviewed the school's website, and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan and local authority reports. I also looked at documents relating to safeguarding and attendance.