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Mark Derrington
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Derrington

Short inspection of Grasmere Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 December 2016, 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 March 2012.

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 successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The difference in attainment between reading and mathematics has closed. The 2016 unvalidated results show that, by the end of Years 2 and 6, the proportion of pupils meeting expected standards are above national averages in reading and mathematics. Teachers successfully plan lessons to develop pupils' use of calculation in real-life problems. Pupils set their targets for reading, writing and mathematics alongside their teachers and parents. These are regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils know how well they are progressing. As a result, pupils can identify what areas they need to work on throughout the school year.

You have recently had to make the difficult decision to leave Grasmere due to family commitments. The governors have been proactive in securing an effective succession plan for interim leadership in partnership with a local outstanding school. They worked with the support of the local authority in brokering the new arrangement, while they look to appoint a substantive headteacher. The school's middle leadership team has the capacity and skills to maintain the quality of education for the pupils during the transition.

The leaders' use of pupil premium funding ensures that the differences are diminishing between the progress of disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged, and that of other pupils nationally. Leaders know these pupils well and accurately identify any barriers to learning. A small number of the pupils

also have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The skilled group of teaching assistants provides good support for them. The school ensures that these pupils are fully included in class work. Equal opportunities are promoted well. For example, pupils who may not have someone to read to at home have an allocated adult to ensure that there is someone who tracks their reading. As a result of this and other initiatives, reading results in 2016 were above the national average at the end of key stage 1. By the end of Year 6, the proportions of disadvantaged pupils achieving the standard expected in reading and mathematics are at national averages. However, leaders acknowledge that most-able disadvantaged pupils had not made as much progress in reading, writing and mathematics as other pupils nationally with similar starting points. Plans have been put in place to address this. The curriculum has been reviewed to provide additional challenge. The use of challenging books for reading and problem-solving in mathematics now ensures that the most able pupils make better progress.

The 2016 small dip in early years outcomes resulted in the provision being adapted to ensure that the number of children achieving a good level of development rises this year. Increased formal opportunities for whole-class and group phonics teaching have successfully improved the progress of the children's reading. Well-planned activities follow children's interests and develop early writing and number work. For example, children had the opportunity to write dog licences in the post office corner because the teacher knew some children have dogs as pets. The outside ice cream shop is a busy place where children enjoy writing orders. Your evidence from tracking children's progress indicates that a higher number of children are on track to meet or exceed standards expected by the end of the early years foundation stage.

Leaders have developed an effective system for giving pupils feedback. Books show that teachers give guidance regularly. However, there are still inconsistencies in the use of the school policy seen in some books. Leaders agreed that where the feedback is more precise the pupils make better progress. Despite noticeable improvements in some subjects, the school has prioritised further developments in giving feedback to eradicate disparity across the classes in writing and other subjects.

Governors are an active group and have an accurate picture of the school's performance. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning through sharp analysis of data and reports from school leaders. They understand their statutory duties well. They have maintained the confidence of the school community through the new leadership arrangements for next term.

Parents are supportive of the staff at Grasmere and appreciate the rich curriculum offer their children receive. Well-attended family learning sessions help them know how to support their children. They have confidence in the school's work in keeping their children safe. Parents feel that all staff are approachable and that any concerns are dealt with swiftly.

Behaviour is a strength of the school. The pupils are friendly and come to school

with smiles and a cheery hello to their teachers. They are confident in their knowledge of online safety. They understand the different types of bullying and have excellent attitudes to their learning. Consequently, relationships between the pupils and staff are strong across the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that the appropriate checks for staff recruitment and volunteers are robust. Training for staff has included work on female genital mutilation, child sexual exploitation and the duty to report any risk to pupils of radicalisation. All staff and governors use the latest government requirements about keeping children safe. Staff are vigilant in reporting any concerns. The school uses the local authority services effectively when cases need escalating to other agencies. As a result, the school's systems are good at ensuring that families receive strong support when it is needed.

Attendance is monitored regularly. The school's work has been successful in reducing the persistent absence of pupils who have an education, health and care plan. Leaders identify what the barriers are to irregular attendance and provide families with focused support. As a result, attendance has improved and is now above the national average.

Inspection findings

- Leaders at all levels have a strong understanding of the school's performance. The effective monitoring, feedback to and support of all staff ensure the continued improvement of teaching and learning. As a result, teaching is good across the school.
- Middle leaders have been instrumental in developing a rich and creative curriculum that meets the needs of pupils at Grasmere. This ensures that the wider curriculum subjects are valued and taught well.
- The teaching of reading is a strength across the school. Phonics results show that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard by the end of Year 1 is above national average. Pupils develop their reading skills well as they move up the school. They actively choose challenging books to read and enjoy using the well-stocked library. The numbers of pupils meeting or exceeding national expectation is above average by the end of Year 6.
- Mathematics teaching is improving and the school's current assessment information shows that more pupils are able to work at greater depth. This is because of the high level of challenge given to pupils across the ability ranges.
- The school has an extended sports guarantee for all pupils. It draws on quality coaching and local facilities to enhance pupils' experience. Good use of the sports premium has seen the school's success in a number of national competitions in a range of sporting activities.
- The leaders have identified that further work is necessary to make sure that feedback to pupils builds greater progress. Book scrutinies identify examples of good practice that the leaders use as models of good practice. This is beginning to be used to build the capacity for improvement, particularly in writing.

However, there remains some inconsistency in the use of the school's feedback policy.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of feedback for pupils is of a high quality by the consistent use of the school's policy, particularly in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morgan
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the beginning of the inspection, I agreed with you that I would prioritise the following areas:

- the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school
- the action taken to address the high level of persistent absence of pupils with education, health and care plans
- the use of pupil premium funding to diminish differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally with the same starting points
- how teacher feedback has an impact on the progress of pupils, particularly in writing.

I carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- met with you, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders
- held meetings with members of the governing body
- held a discussion on the telephone with a representative from the local authority
- heard pupils read from Reception Year to Year 6
- scrutinised school documents, including safeguarding records, policies and procedures, the single central record of pre-employment checks and assessment information
- visited lessons across the school with you
- held a book scrutiny with pupils and you about the work in their books
- held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day
- considered 36 parent responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.