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Deborah Vrlec
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Dear Miss Vrlec

Short inspection of Victoria Park Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 2 February 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 April 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You and the leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have created an inclusive school in which all pupils thrive and work well together regardless of gender, age, ethnic or family background. Staff have detailed knowledge about families and their children which enables them to provide the right teaching and care for each pupil. As governors commented 'It is like a village school,' and 'It is the heart of the community.' Standards are consistently above average because of staff's high expectations of pupils and because of relentlessly good teaching.

At the previous inspection, attendance was judged to be inadequate. There has been significant improvement and attendance is now above the national average for primary schools. The school was also asked to improve its assessment and recording systems. The deputy headteacher has worked very well with the junior school to align recording systems. You and senior leaders now track pupils' progress and attainment very carefully. From the previous inspection there is still work to be done to improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding. In mathematics, for example, pupils do not spend enough time explaining their thinking or applying their skills and knowledge in problems and investigations.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the staff have taken action to make sure children's safety is a priority. For example, the well-being and progress of vulnerable pupils is considered in every staff meeting. Every parent who completed the online survey agreed that their child feels safe and almost every parent agreed their child was well looked after. You have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. You follow up concerns and share information with other agencies including social services, education welfare officers and medical specialists. There have been no safeguarding complaints or concerns since the previous inspection. Staff and volunteers are vetted carefully to make sure they are eligible to work with children.

There have been no logged incidents of bullying or derogatory language. There are good levels of supervision and equipment is available at morning break which keeps pupils busy, active and occupied. Pupils play and mix harmoniously regardless of age, gender or racial background.

Inspection findings

- You and senior leaders have successfully tackled most of the points for improvement identified at the previous inspection. From a paper-based recording system you have moved to a computerised system. Transition from Year 2 to Year 3 is smoother and more effective because it is easier to pass on assessment information in reading, writing and mathematics. You have created an assessment system with pupils' learning and progress at its heart. Staff plan lessons that are based on their assessments of pupils' skills which they identify in lessons and in pupils' work.
- You and the deputy headteacher have an accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. You have created improvement plans that are simple to follow and identify the most important priorities for school improvement. Over time, there is a track record of maintaining high standards by the end of Year 2.
- Members of the governing body are ambitious for the school, knowledgeable and skilled. Before a new governor is appointed they conduct an audit to identify what extra skills or experience the governing body needs. They have good oversight of the school. They have a detailed understanding of published assessment information and track carefully how the pupil premium grant is spent to make sure it is effective.
- Governors are aware of the weaknesses in the school's website and have recruited a governor with appropriate skills and expertise to lead developments. The website, at present, requires improvement. It does not publish the information that it should to be compliant with the law. For example, it does not give enough details about the spending or the impact of the pupil premium or sports premium grants from the government. It does not contain the correct information about what is taught in each subject in each year group. Similarly, some of the school's policies do not comply fully with regulations such as the child protection policy. Governors

are already taking action to make sure that there is a system of checking whether the school and the governing body comply with all statutory regulations.

- The local authority provides valuable support, including through frequent newsletters and emails, and has brokered some school-to-school support and expertise. There is more support planned to help teachers be even more effective in leading their subjects. Some of the improvements to assessment and recording have been as a result of local authority input and advice.
- Pupils make relentlessly good progress across the school from their different starting points and standards have been well above average at the end of Year 2 for a number of years. Disadvantaged pupils in 2015 attained much lower than other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, considering their starting points, they made good progress. You and senior leaders track the progress of this group of pupils very carefully and examine in depth their academic and social needs before successfully tackling any barriers to learning they may have, particularly any lateness or poor attendance.
- Children's attainment in reading, by the end of Reception, is above average. This progress continues into Year 1. There has been a three-year increase in Year 1 pupils attaining the expected level in the national phonics screening check.
- In 2015, a well-above-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils attained the expected level; some of this success was because of well-managed individual and group support for reading. In lessons there are good connections made between splitting words into sounds to help reading and combining letters together for spelling. By the end of Year 2, almost half of pupils consistently attain the higher Level 3.
- Victoria Park is a very good place to be if you are a boy compared with other schools nationally. The school has successfully implemented a number of changes to teaching and to the curriculum. As a result, boys attain much higher than other boys nationally, particularly in reading and writing. There is very little difference between the attainment and progress of boys and girls.
- In mathematics, pupils develop a secure knowledge and understanding of number and calculation. However, pupils need more opportunities to explain their answer methods or their thinking mathematically, of reasoning mathematically or of applying their knowledge in a range of problems and investigations. These skills are key aspects of the National Curriculum which the school now needs to tackle.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics, all pupils apply their very good knowledge of number to solve different types of problems and investigations and to explain their thinking and their findings mathematically
- they check systematically that the school meets all of its statutory duties

particularly in relation to information on the website and the content of its policies.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the teacher who leads science. I also met five members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- I observed teaching in four classes and looked through some pupils' work. I observed pupils' behaviour at play and lunchtime.
- I considered the views of 43 parents, four pupils and one member of staff who completed Ofsted's online surveys.
- I looked through a range of documents including school policies, plans for improvement and your self-evaluation.