

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Paola Riddle
Headteacher
Brentfield Primary School
41–43 Meadow Garth
London
NW10 0SL

Dear Mrs Riddle

Short inspection of Brentfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 October 2016 with Edison David, Ofsted Inspector, 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 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 are quietly ambitious and continually strive to make sure that both staff and pupils achieve what they are capable of. As a result of the school's expansion from a two-form entry to a three-form entry, you and governors have bolstered leadership capacity to address almost all of the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. The additional posts of deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and early years foundation leader have enabled you to secure further tangible improvements. In particular, you have improved the quality of teaching and learning, recognised as an area for improvement. This is particularly so in the early years, key stage 1 and lower key stage 2. There have also been significant changes in staffing, with just over one in three teachers and one in four teaching assistants joining in recent years.

Children now make good and sometimes rapid progress in the early years. Younger pupils make solidly good progress in key stage 1, providing a firm foundation for an upward trend of good achievement in key stage 2. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2016 was well above the national figure, with disadvantaged children achieving very well. However, only a few children exceeded the early learning goals, leaving further scope to ensure that the most able children achieve even more.

There has been a notable improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics check, with more pupils achieving this than the national average in 2016. Pupils read with fluency, confidence and accuracy and with good understanding. Building on this success, the unvalidated attainment and progress information for 2016 suggests that Year 2 pupils achieved as well as all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils achieved as well as all pupils nationally, eliminating any differences that existed previously. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth was the same as the national figure in reading and just above in writing and mathematics. This is compelling evidence of how successful you and your team are now in making sure that younger pupils, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged effectively in reading, writing and mathematics.

You and your leaders are fully aware that more work needs to be done to make sure pupils' outcomes in key stage 2 are as consistently good in reading and writing as they are in mathematics. In 2016, more pupils achieved the expected level in mathematics, but fewer did so in reading and writing. You have implemented strategies to make sure that progress is accelerated in these two subjects. You have reviewed how reading is taught, adopting an approach which secures pupils' engagement through active discussions, initiated by the pupils. This is improving their skills of inference and deduction. Staff were keen to tell me that this, together with a well-stocked library and inviting reading areas in each class, is fostering pupils' love of reading.

You have begun to address weaknesses in teachers' feedback to pupils about their work. Nonetheless, while some teachers are adept at identifying what pupils need to work on next, and providing them with precise pointers for improvement, not all are. For example, the most able pupils are not always provided with feedback which encourages them to think hard about their work. This is particularly so in key stage 2. Work in books shows that pupils apply their writing skills well in literacy lessons, as well as having good opportunities to write for meaning in other subjects. Nonetheless, teachers do not always capitalise on this to consolidate and extend key writing skills. Too often teachers accept scruffy handwriting and do not correct spelling mistakes. You track pupils' progress meticulously so that interventions can be put in place to boost their achievement. However, these half-termly reviews do not identify what teachers need to do differently in lessons to speed up pupils' progress.

You and senior leaders have created several avenues to improve communication with parents as well as enabling them to have a better understanding of the school's work and responsibilities. Parents attend workshops, observe lessons, and attend a newly formed parents' forum, where issues are discussed and dealt with in an open and positive way. This has included external visitors, with representatives from social services who have explained to parents that it is the school's duty to report any potential dangers posed to pupils. The partnership with parents is strong and you deal effectively with any concerns they may have. It is clear that you have fully addressed this

area for improvement raised at the time of the last inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding is given the highest priority and it continues to be effective. A well thought out plan of safeguarding activities means that no stone is left unturned to secure the safety and well-being of pupils. All staff, including the two designated safeguarding leads, have had the most up-to-date training. This includes the duty placed on schools to report any potential incidents of female genital mutilation. Everyone is aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Staff, governors and parents have all undertaken training or attended awareness workshops. All concerns are recorded carefully and referred to the appropriate agencies.

Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep safe at school and at home, including when using the internet. The curriculum provides a range of experiences for pupils to explore potential dangers and how to manage risks. Each year group has lessons on healthy relationships and how to stay safe from abuse and exploitation. Pupils know about all forms of bullying, but they are adamant that bullying does not exist in this school. They say that if people are 'not nice' then adults are quick to act on this and deal with any issues.

Inspection findings

- Parents, staff, governors, an external consultant and pupils confirmed our observations that you have created a safe and inclusive school that provides a highly positive learning environment for all pupils to learn effectively and thrive. Of the 74 parents who responded to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, the majority were positive about how well the school responds to any concerns they may have. Almost all were content with all aspects of the school's work. Informal discussions with parents also established parental satisfaction, with many parents being highly complimentary about how well the school manages behaviour. Parents are confident that the school keeps their children safe.
- Your open and honest approach provides the bedrock for pupils to achieve well and to develop the life skills they need to continue to flourish and participate positively in society. You encourage staff to be reflective and to support one another. Staff enjoy taking on new challenges, including the recent innovation of filming their own practice, sharing this and reflecting on what has worked well and what needs to be worked on next.
- Senior leaders provide good support and advice to their colleagues, through a programme of coaching and mentoring, including those teachers new to the profession. Middle leaders are fully involved in making sure that their area of responsibility is effective. Indeed, you are a forward-looking school and gladly embrace working closely with other schools, including a

secondary academy and an outstanding primary school.

- You are keen to raise aspirations and have secured effective partnership work with the secondary school, so that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, have the opportunity to work with older pupils scientifically.
- You and senior leaders have embarked on a programme to make sure that the school moves towards its quest of excellence, by working with outstanding schools and using this experience to implement further strategies.
- Your work has focused on improving the quality of teaching. Through careful monitoring, you and other leaders know how good teaching is and how well pupils are achieving through half-termly reviews. Pupils are then given extra help before school, during the school day and after school. Misconceptions in lessons are picked up quickly, and re-visited the same day to enable pupils to practise and consolidate key skills. The inclusion leader keeps a close check on the effectiveness of interventions to maximise their impact on pupils' progress. However, the regular reviews of pupil achievement do not identify what teachers must do differently to make sure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can in lessons, particularly in writing in key stage 2.
- The learning environment in the early years foundation stage is much improved, including the outdoor area. Creative activities to develop children's language and communication skills, including support from the speech and language therapist, as well as targeted work to develop children's writing skills, are paying dividends. Children work and play together in the mud kitchen or sing and dance on the stage. The early years leader provides excellent professional development for her colleagues, most recently on how to undertake effective observations of children's learning in order to plan their next steps. Children are confident and highly cooperative. They listen carefully to adults and respond to their instructions immediately. Nonetheless, although four out of five children achieved a good level of development this year, too few exceeded the early learning goals.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is further challenge for the most able children, including disadvantaged children, so that more exceed the early learning goals
- leaders identify what teachers need to do differently to make sure pupils' progress is speeded up, particularly for the most able pupils in key stage 2 in writing
- the marking and feedback policy is implemented effectively by all teachers so that pupils know precisely what they need to work on next in their writing and especially in key stage 2.
- pupils' writing skills are consolidated and extended in other subjects across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- how well children achieve in the early years foundation stage and in key stage 1, with a particular focus on disadvantaged pupils
- how effectively reading and writing are taught in key stage 2.

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

- visits to most classes in the school, jointly with you and one of your deputy headteachers
- scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils
- meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, governors, including the vice-chair, and an external consultant
- we took account of the 74 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and talked informally to parents at the start of the school day
- several pupils read to us, including the most able and less able pupils. They also shared their views about the school and how safe they feel
- we evaluated documents, including school development plans, evaluations, safeguarding information, information about pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings.