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Mr Christian York
Headteacher
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Dear Mr York

Short inspection of Ealdham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 October 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since becoming headteacher in 2010, you made improvements rapidly and these have been maintained. This has been at a time when there have been many changes to your community, leading to a great increase in the number of pupils in the school. You have set high expectations about what pupils can achieve and you provide clear direction for the school's future improvement, based upon the school's core values. The culture of the school is captured in your school's logo, with the words chosen by one of your pupils: to 'delight, excite and achieve'. The school's core values emphasise the importance of every single child in the school community and how the school can best support pupils. All members of staff understand your vision and demonstrate these values in their work.

You have created a leadership team that is determined to do the best for all the pupils in the school. Nonetheless, middle leaders have yet to be held fully to account for their areas of responsibility. Together, you have led improvements in the quality of teaching that were identified as necessary in the last report. For example, you have ensured that most teachers provide pupils with feedback to improve their work and provide many opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills. You have also improved the curriculum for all your pupils so that they enjoy their learning. The focus on learning based around a different book for each year group is emphasising

the importance of reading. In 2016, the unvalidated information shows that no pupils achieved a high score in mathematics. The learning walk confirmed that as a result of an emphasis on mathematics mastery in Year 6, more pupils are working in greater depth.

Pupils are very proud of the school. You have created an environment where they are safe and can thrive. They behave well in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. Pupils demonstrate independence from an early age. Children in the early years choose from a wide range of activities so that all achieve well, irrespective of their ability, gender or background. As pupils get older you build upon this, so that they take on even more responsibilities. For example, your communication ambassadors help to resolve minor issues between other pupils in order to ensure that behaviour is as good as it can be. You have continued to improve attendance. Your work with families and other agencies has led to good improvements. However, there is more work to be done to make sure that those pupils who are frequently absent attend school more regularly.

Safeguarding is effective.

When you spot that pupils arrive at school feeling unhappy, you make sure that the learning mentor is able to support them. Leaders ensure that everyone at the school has a collective responsibility to keep pupils safe and all staff understand that. The deputy headteacher is the designated safeguarding lead. Working closely with other members of the inclusion team, the deputy headteacher makes sure that all statutory requirements are met and that all pupils are safe. For example, visitor checks are rigorous and pupils are well aware of keeping themselves safe from a wide range of potential dangers, including cyber bullying.

The business manager makes sure that all employment checks are rigorously undertaken and, each term, the governor linked to safeguarding monitors the school's practice. An external audit of safeguarding practices in the summer praised the school for its work.

All staff receive child protection training, at the appropriate level, which is updated regularly. As a result, staff have a thorough understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. This includes the duty to report any suspected cases of female genital mutilation and the protection of pupils from radicalisation.

Inspection findings

- Governors make a considerable investment of their time and in the school. As a result, they know the school well and use their good range of skills to fully support their roles and responsibilities. This also helps them to question and challenge the headteacher about the progress of all pupils in the school. They

have recently achieved accreditation of Governor Mark, of which they are very proud.

- Senior leaders model effective leadership skills, including how to check the quality of planning and feedback. They make sure that all teachers carry out all of the school's requirements for teaching and learning through observations and work sampling. The progress of each pupil is looked at carefully so that leaders can check if pupils are making sufficient progress. As a result, they are able to intervene at the earliest opportunity to ensure that progress improves even further.
- Senior leaders continue to develop their staff and provide them with opportunities to take on greater responsibility, for example in the extended leadership team. Some are new to the post and have yet to show significant impact in their work. Senior leaders understand that for the school to continue to improve, it is important that middle leaders consistently emphasise the progress of disadvantaged groups.
- Recent developments with the inclusion team are helping to improve attendance over time. However, many pupils are frequently absent. The school recognises that this is a priority. It was an area for improvement in the last inspection. The school has in place a full range of ways to improve attendance, including: first-day calling; the use of additional funding; and the support of the attendance officer. However, attendance for some pupils is too low, including attendance of vulnerable pupils.
- There is a big emphasis on reading and writing in all year groups, to make sure that the needs of pupils are met as early as possible, with the right actions put in place. More rigorous monitoring by the senior leadership team checks the progress of all pupils. As a result, most pupils' books show that the school's agreed approach to its marking policy is followed.
- The inclusion team has recently been set up to look at the best support for pupils who require additional help. It includes all staff who are responsible for attendance and safeguarding as well as support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Members of the team have helped to improve the work, behaviour and attendance of a number of pupils and added to the capacity for leadership in the school.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs is strong. The school's special educational needs coordinator manages the support for pupils well, including links with outside agencies. This ensures that their needs are identified as early as possible and appropriate actions are put in place. For example, a teacher is employed three days per week to support pupils identified as dyslexic. However, the analysis of performance information for all disadvantaged pupils is not linked with attendance information, behaviour and referrals to the learning mentor. As a result, staff have an incomplete picture.
- In the Nursery, many children arrive with skills that are below expectations for their age, particularly in language and communication and personal development. Staff ensure that children practise their early writing skills. The school has responded well to this area for improvement from the last inspection

report. As a result, throughout the early years, opportunities for writing are everywhere, enabling children to be more confident.

- All pupils in key stage 1 have targets set against end of year expectations. The organisation of the learning supports pupils with learning difficulties, so that these pupils perform well. For example, an adult works with a small group of pupils, modelling the formation of numbers and pupils respond with greater accuracy. They are then able to solve a simple problem. Most-able pupils are challenged through good questioning by teachers, while the feedback in pupils' books shows that teachers help all pupils to further improve their work.
- In key stage 2, pupils are challenged in lessons to improve their work, especially in writing. There are high expectations of all pupils, who are exposed frequently to high-quality texts, and there is good evidence of impact in their work. They write well independently. In Year 6, a greater focus on mathematics for most-able pupils is beginning to have an impact. Feedback challenges pupils' thinking, asking them to explain their answers. However, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported and evidence from their writing shows that there are improvements in both quantity and quality.
- Pupils in Years 4 and 6 who read to me read well. They enjoy reading and as they get older they read from a wider variety of texts. Pupils who have difficulty in reading are supported by the school's reading recovery programme. As a result, pupils' confidence in reading has grown, such as in pronouncing unfamiliar words. The most able disadvantaged pupils read with confidence, fluency and enjoyment.
- Attainment for pupils at the end of key stage 2 has improved since the last inspection and broadly matches the national picture. Progress measures show that disadvantaged pupils achieve well and all pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, too few pupils achieve the higher levels, resulting in only average attainment in all subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- attendance remains a priority for the school so that the overall attendance level improves and the number of pupils who are frequently absent reduces
- middle leaders are supported as they take on additional responsibilities so that they demonstrate increasing confidence in their respective roles and improve outcomes, especially for disadvantaged pupils
- the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils are sufficiently challenged in lessons so that by the time they leave school, a greater proportion of them exceed expected standards.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for The Royal London Borough of Greenwich.

Yours sincerely

Richard Barnes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Five key lines of enquiry were established with the senior leadership team, these being:

- how is the culture of the school enabling all pupils from the early years to Year 6 to make good progress over time in both reading and writing?
- what actions are leaders taking to improve attendance in the school, especially for disadvantaged pupils?
- how are leaders ensuring that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is accelerated across the school?
- in what ways are leaders ensuring that teachers provide a greater challenge for the most able, especially when most-able pupils are disadvantaged?
- how are leaders ensuring that safeguarding practices in the school enable pupils to be safe?

I met with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and support staff. I held discussions with members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority. I checked the school's website for compliance. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, school policies, information on the progress of pupils and the single central record. I spoke informally to a number of pupils and listened to pupils read. I also visited all classes in the school in order to gather evidence on particular aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.