

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Barry Read
Headteacher
The R J Mitchell Primary School
Tangmere Crescent
Hornchurch
Essex
RM12 5PP

Dear Mr Read

Short inspection of The R J Mitchell Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 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. Almost all the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. The school has developed partnerships with schools in Poland and Stoke. These relationships have broadened pupils' knowledge of cultures other than their own. Leaders have worked hard to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in writing. The unvalidated attainment and progress information for 2016 indicates that the writing results for the end of key stage 1 were above national averages. You identified that the boys' progress in writing was a further area that needed improvement. The new lead teacher for English has swiftly adapted the curriculum to engage the interest of the boys. This has already had a positive impact on the current pupils' progress, and the historical difference between boys and girls across the school is closing significantly.

You have managed the challenge of recruitment well and have ensured that school-employed teaching staff teach all classes. You have increased the capacity in the senior leadership team. As a result, the support they provide ensures that teaching remains good. The school is currently expanding from one-form to two-form entry. You and the leadership team made careful plans to ensure that the infant pupils' transition into the new building was seamless. Leaders made sure pupils' learning remained a strong focus. Consequently, the achievement in key stage 1 for reading, writing and mathematics remains above national averages.

Leaders share the aspirations you have for pupils. They model effectively the

school's values for the staff and pupils. You have a dedicated and passionate team who work hard to ensure that pupils achieve their potential. Consequently, the work of school leaders has secured further improvement. For example, the 2016 results in the early years for children achieving a good level of development were below national averages, especially for boys. The leaders quickly put plans in place to adapt the curriculum to improve boys' achievement. The impact has been greater engagement of boys in their learning and is leading to better progress. The quality of education for the children in the setting has improved. The children now have greater opportunities to develop their writing skills across a number of areas. The teaching of phonics has improved. Pupils use their 'sounding out' techniques successfully when reading unfamiliar words. School assessments show that pupils' progress has improved and gender differences have closed.

School leaders, including governors, have made sure that the effective use of the pupil premium funding is diminishing the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. The senior leadership team accurately identify the barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. The provision is enhanced by the recent appointment of pupil premium champions, which has ensured that targeted resources improve the progress of identified pupils. Teachers use the new assessment system effectively to highlight the needs of pupils. Current information indicates that most pupils make strong progress in lessons and over time. Carefully planned lessons ensure that the most able pupils, including the disadvantaged most able, are challenged sufficiently.

The support given to pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities is strong. The school runs a resourced provision for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder. These pupils play a full part in the life of the school. Sessions planned to develop each pupil and build on his or her individual strengths are effective. The staff know the pupils well. They respond to the pupils' needs deftly. Consequently, these pupils make good progress.

Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They regularly check to see that improvements make a difference to the outcomes of pupils and constantly evaluate how things could be improved. Governors use reports from the headteacher and subject leaders to hold school staff to account and agree where further work is necessary.

Parents are supportive of the school. They say that their children love coming to school. They appreciate the support the school gives them when they need it. Any issues are quickly dealt with and senior staff are always available to talk to parents. The e-safety workshops for parents ensure that they are well informed about online safety.

Pupils say they love their lessons and enjoy their work. They feel safe in school and out on trips because of the effective work of their teachers. Pupils are confident that staff will deal with any negative behaviour quickly and fairly. The pupils know who they can talk to if they have any concerns. They are proud to attend R J Mitchell.

Safeguarding is effective.

Training is up to date and the school leaders, including governors, have ensured that all staff are confident in reporting concerns using the school's effective procedures. The recent government requirements have been disseminated to all staff and governors. This includes the duty for schools to report any potential risks of radicalisation and incidents of female genital mutilation. Recruitment and induction for new staff are rigorous and regularly checked.

The school leaders have set up a school and family support system. This is an internal school group that meets to review pupils' attendance. When concerns over pupils' attendance are identified, the school provides effective support to ensure that persistent absence is reduced. When the strategies for boosting pupils' attendance are successful, this results in rapid improvements in pupils' achievement. Currently, overall attendance is around the national average.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and governors continue to have high expectations for the pupils. They continually make strides in improving teaching across the school. Accurate analysis of teaching and learning ensures that teachers use the quality professional development provided to improve pupils' progress. Teaching remains good overall across the school.
- The latest unvalidated assessment information shows that the school is in the top 5% of schools nationally for attainment in reading. The school teaches reading well and pupils make good progress across key stage 1. The teaching of phonics is good and the number of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 check is well above the national figure. Where boys had not made as much progress as girls, leaders have put in measures to successfully reduce the historical difference. Pupils show confidence and appropriate use of expression when reading aloud.
- Following the early years assessments in 2016, you were disappointed with the proportion of children achieving a good level of development. Subsequently, you put additional resources into the Year 1 classes to ensure that the pupils catch up to meet end of year standards. Currently, school assessment information shows that pupils' progress has been rapid in reading, writing and mathematics and most pupils are on track to meet age-related expectations.
- Teachers' analysis of the assessment information results in pupils being challenged appropriately. Most books show strong evidence of pupils improving the standard of their work. Pupils know how to improve their work using the guidance given by teachers as well as opportunities to peer- and self-assess. This results in pupils using the range of advice well and, consequently, they make good progress over time, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The unvalidated 2016 results show that by the end of Year 6 pupils achieved above national averages in reading and mathematics. Progress in reading and mathematics is strong across key stage 2. The school has identified that writing is an area that needs further improvement. The English subject leader has introduced new writing initiatives that are already having a positive impact on

current pupils' progress. Work in pupils' books shows that the quality of writing is improving. However, the school acknowledges that there is still some work to do to reach the school's ambitious targets.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are more opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their writing skills across a wider range of curriculum subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Havering. 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 weaker writing profile, in particular for boys.
- The use of pupil premium funding to diminish differences between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally with the same starting points.
- How the school tracks the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities across the school.

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

- I met with you in your role as headteacher, the two assistant headteachers and middle leaders.
- I held meetings with members of the governing body and held a discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- I heard pupils read from Years 1 to 6.
- I scrutinised school documents, including, safeguarding records, policies and procedures, the single central record of pre-employment checks, and assessment information.
- I visited lessons across the school with the headteacher.
- I held informal discussions with parents at the start of the school day.
- I considered 32 parent responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.