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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Liz Bradbury
Executive Headteacher
Park Hill Junior School
Parkfield Drive
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV8 2JJ

Dear Mrs Bradbury

Short inspection of Park Hill Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 17 January 2017, 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.

Park Hill is a welcoming and happy school where pupils thrive. You, other leaders, staff and governors have high expectations for pupils, both for their academic achievements and their personal development. Pupils rise to these expectations. They make good progress, overall, and typically reach high standards in their work across the curriculum and especially in writing. Pupils are polite and friendly. They take their responsibilities seriously; class 'meeters and greeters' welcome visitors and explain what they are learning about. Pupils behave well. They are lively and energetic at breaktimes but in class they are attentive and ready to learn. By Year 6, pupils grow into mature and thoughtful individuals who make a good contribution to school life and who are well placed to start the next stage in their education.

Your 'glee club' is a powerful example of the school's inclusive, celebratory ethos in action. During this inspection, over 50 pupils from all year groups attended the club at the end of the day. They spent over 45 minutes singing tunefully and joyfully together.

You have taken effective action to deal with the areas requiring development that were highlighted at the previous inspection. Work to improve the curriculum has been especially successful. The school's corridors and public areas contain displays of pupils' work that is of a very high standard. The displays illustrate the depth and

breadth of the curriculum. They highlight the interesting links that are made between subjects and the scope that pupils have to consider and decide how to set about a task. For example, the topic 'the history of plastic' combined work in science with historical research. Each pupil approached their work in a different way, choosing what information to include, what artefacts to add and how to display them. The resulting overall display is exceptionally informative. Other displays illustrate clearly the high standards that pupils attain in writing, art and history, and their love of literature, for example. In addition, teachers make sure that the work pupils are set takes full account of what they know and can do already, and that it contains a good degree of challenge. All pupils, including the most able, grapple with tasks that stretch them and make them think deeply.

No further action is needed to deal with the areas for development from the previous inspection. However, your accurate evaluation of the school's current effectiveness highlights aspects of the school's work that are receiving attention in order to strengthen performance still further. The work that you are doing in mathematics is a good example of this.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. You, other leaders and governors have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and comprehensive. You make sure that everyone understands the contribution that they make towards protecting pupils and keeping them safe. To this end, you organise a comprehensive programme of training for staff at all levels that is regularly updated. You also keep a close check on the number of concerns that are raised and who raises them, and make sure that staff understand that any concern, however minor, should be reported in writing. You and the other designated lead person for safeguarding make well-considered decisions about each case. You are tenacious in following up should a referral to the local authority not be dealt with in a timely way. The lead governor for safeguarding takes a close interest in the effectiveness of the school's procedures, including for safer recruitment and the vetting of new staff, and reports regularly to the governing body.

You and the staff know individual pupils and their circumstances well. You strive to accommodate pupils' needs, especially where pupils may be vulnerable. You pay attention to pupils' emotional well-being: your school counsellor helps pupils who may be experiencing times of stress or anxiety. You take care to teach pupils how to keep themselves safe and to manage risks, especially when using the internet. Posters around the school, designed by pupils, help keep internet safety in the forefront of everyone's minds. You follow Warwickshire's syllabus to teach pupils about their personal safety. Over 100 parents completed the online survey, Parent View. Almost every one said that their child was happy at school, well looked after and safe. Pupils in their responses said that they felt safe at school and that they know who they can turn to if they have a problem.

Inspection findings

- At the start of this inspection, we discussed and agreed three further lines of enquiry. These were: teaching and learning in mathematics, how well the school's provision meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the effectiveness of governance.
- Pupils did not do as well in mathematics in last year's tests and assessments as they did in reading and writing. Results were above the national average, but pupils' progress in mathematics was not as strong as it was in English. You have rightly identified boosting pupils' progress in mathematics as an area for development.
- Observations during this inspection confirm that there are growing strengths in teaching and learning in mathematics as a result of the action that has been taken. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they make it very clear to pupils what they are learning. They plan tasks at three levels of difficulty. These tasks reinforce the concept that is being taught and effectively deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and are keen to contribute. They persevere with tasks, even those that are exceptionally challenging, and are able to explain the strategies they choose to use to solve a problem. Pupils set their work out systematically and neatly in their books.
- Your current assessments show that pupils' progress in mathematics has improved a great deal since the start of this academic year, and that pupils across the school are making progress at a similar rate as in English. Nevertheless, there is still some more work to do before their attainment rises to match that in reading and writing.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well led. There are robust procedures for identifying pupils' individual needs. You make sure to distinguish between those pupils whose attainment is low and need to catch up, and those who have particular needs that have an impact on their learning. Interventions to support pupils' learning and to meet social and emotional needs are carefully planned. They are short-term and the impact is carefully evaluated. Pupils have individual plans and they and their parents are included in regular reviews of progress towards their targets. There is a strong emphasis on supporting and including pupils in class, rather than withdrawing them from lessons, so that they do not miss out on important learning. Where pupils are withdrawn, the support is not always as effective as it should be. Not all staff who support pupils in strengthening their knowledge of phonics have a secure understanding of how to teach this subject.
- The attendance of pupils who receive support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities matches that of others in the school and is above the national average for all pupils. This small group of pupils makes steady, and sometimes strong, progress as a result of interventions and focused teaching.
- The governing body has strengthened the part that it plays in the life of the school since the previous inspection. Members of the governing body are highly committed and knowledgeable. They have a good mix of skills. They understand their role in determining the school's strategic direction and have played a full

part in setting the school's aims and values. Governors undertake training regularly and reflect on how well they work, in order to improve their effectiveness. For example, the governing body has recently changed its structure and no longer has separate committees. Governors and school leaders say that this has had several benefits. All governors now have a deeper understanding of aspects of the school's work relating to finance, personnel, teaching and learning and safeguarding, because they all discuss these topics at governing body meetings. In addition, because the governing body now meets once a month, decisions are made more speedily.

- Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors do not hold back from asking probing questions and seeking clarification in order to fully understand the information that they are given.
- Governors regularly spend time in school. The school hosts 'governor days', when members of the governing body spend time in school watching its everyday work and meeting pupils, parents and staff. The next 'governor day' is scheduled for May, during the time when Year 6 pupils will be taking their tests. This date was deliberately chosen to give governors insight into this important aspect of the school's work. Link governors work closely with designated members of staff to keep aspects of the school's work under review.
- The governing body keeps the school's work under close review and knows areas of strength and where efforts need to be made next in order to continue to improve.
- There are clearly many strengths in governance. However, the governing body has not yet developed means by which it can fully evaluate the impact of the decisions it makes on outcomes for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- training is provided for those staff who support pupils with reading, so that they use technical language accurately and fully understand the aspects that they are teaching
- teachers continue to implement the strategies already begun to boost progress in mathematics, so that pupils' attainment rises further and matches that in reading and writing
- the governing body considers ways in which it can measure the impact of its work on the school's performance.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and the head of teaching and learning to discuss the school's self-evaluation and current priorities. I discussed the school's approach to safeguarding with you, and provision and outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with the head of teaching and learning who is also the coordinator for this provision. I also met with a group of governors.

I observed teaching and learning in six mathematics lessons, talking informally with pupils about their work and looking at their books. I spent time in the playground and dining hall. I scrutinised the school's record of recruitment and vetting checks and other documents relating to safeguarding. I looked at the range of displays in corridors and around the school. I examined documents, including the school's plan for improvement, assessment information and minutes of meetings of the governing body. I took account of the 101 responses made by parents on the Parent View website, and of the views of 117 pupils and eight members of staff who completed online questionnaires.