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30 January 2017

Mrs Lyn Gray
Headteacher
Grove Road Primary School
Cromwell Road
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Dear Mrs Gray

Short inspection of Grove Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Since your appointment, you have raised standards by addressing effectively the aspects of the school's work that you identified as needing improvement. This has ensured that pupils continue to receive a good quality of education.

Together with senior leaders, you have taken effective action to improve attendance, which is now in line with, or better than the national average for most groups of pupils. Pupils' positive attitudes to school contribute to the good progress they make in their learning. You have worked closely with your deputy headteacher and middle leaders to ensure that pupils' learning is monitored closely and supported appropriately. You recognised that pupils' attainment and progress in writing were not as strong as they were in mathematics. Consequently, you introduced a new initiative in key stage 2, which focused on developing pupils' sentence construction and the vocabulary they use in their writing. You are now rolling out this approach across the rest of the school. The impact of this can be seen most noticeably in key stage 2, where teachers' expectations and level of challenge for the most able disadvantaged pupils are stronger in writing. As a result, work in pupils' books shows that a greater proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the expected and higher standards by the end of key stage 2. Governors ask challenging questions, holding you to account for pupils' achievement. However, governors and leaders need to be more precise in how they measure the impact of all new strategies to improve outcome for disadvantaged pupils.

You have created a calm and purposeful school environment where pupils enjoy their learning. Classroom displays extend pupils' learning and thinking. Most parents spoken to during the inspection reported that they are happy with the information the school provides about their child's progress. Parents say that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after. You recognise that some parents have been concerned about recent staff changes and you are committed to working with parents so that their children get the most out of their time at Grove Road Primary School.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding procedures are robust and fit for purpose. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that all records are of high quality and sufficiently detailed, including details of pre-employment checks made on staff. Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. For example, they regularly undertake checks to ensure that pupils are kept safe and feel safe in school. Governors also attend training regularly to make sure that they understand the latest statutory guidance. Staff are well trained, vigilant and follow the school's internal procedures should they need to raise any concerns. Senior leaders work together effectively to ensure that timely and appropriate actions are taken to reduce risks to pupils' welfare. This includes seeking advice and support from external agencies when required. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. For example, pupils told inspectors that they know how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- The first key line of enquiry asked whether disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able, are being challenged sufficiently to achieve the higher standard in reading and writing at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. We reviewed the information on how well pupils achieved in the 2016 statutory reading and writing assessments. This showed that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who attained the higher standard was below other pupils nationally.
- During visits to lessons, we scrutinised disadvantaged pupils' writing. We found that pupils in key stage 2 were making good gains in their writing skills in English and their topic work. The school's assessment information shows that a greater percentage of pupils are on track to achieve the higher standard. However, some pupils, particularly the most able in key stage 1, are not consistently challenged in their writing. Consequently, they do not always achieve the standard of which they are capable.
- Pupils read with fluency and accuracy, demonstrating a good understanding of the texts they have read. Pupils show a great love for reading. They have ready access to the well-resourced, centrally positioned library. This reflects the school's work to promote reading, with leaders placing literacy at the core of their work to raise standards.

- Our second key line of enquiry explored disadvantaged pupils' attainment in phonics. The 2016 results show that the proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below average compared with other pupils nationally. Leaders' analysis of these outcomes rightly identified this concern and they have taken effective steps to help pupils who fell behind to catch up.
- The third line of enquiry asked whether leaders are taking appropriate action to improve the persistent absence and fixed-term exclusions of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils. You have carefully analysed the attendance information and worked closely with families and external agencies. Consequently, the attendance and progress of these pupils have improved this year.
- The proportion of these pupils who are given fixed-term exclusions has also reduced, reflecting an overall positive trend for pupils' behaviour. Leaders have drawn on expertise from the Grove Road Centre for pupils who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. This supports teachers to plan well for pupils' needs and encourages pupils to attend school regularly.
- The fourth line of enquiry examined outcomes for children in the early years. Your school's assessment information shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has fallen since 2015. Similarly, the proportion of children who reached the expected standard in writing was below the national average. The 2015 results showed that the proportion of disadvantaged children who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was also below average. You have rightly identified this as a key priority and have acted swiftly to improve this aspect of the school's work.
- Leaders have capitalised on external support to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children currently in the early years. Leaders, including a new early years leader, monitor children's progress carefully to ensure that they are on track to achieve a good level of development. The pupil premium funding is being used effectively to purchase resources that support children's language development and their application of phonic skills in their writing. However, the most able children are not consistently challenged to reach their full potential in developing their writing skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers consistently challenge pupils to apply and develop their skills in different types of writing, particularly the most able in the early years and key stage 1
- governors and leaders measure accurately the impact of all new initiatives so that standards continue to improve for all groups of pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajeshree Mehta
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

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

- whether disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2, particularly the most able, are challenged sufficiently to achieve the higher standard in reading and writing
- what action leaders are taking to improve outcomes in phonics in key stage 1 and in particular, whether a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils are on track to meet the expected standard
- how leaders are working to reduce fixed-term exclusions and improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- what actions leaders have taken to improve standards in the early years, especially for disadvantaged children
- whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare are effective.

The inspector carried out the following activities to explore these areas during this inspection:

- held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher. Meetings were also held with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, middle leaders, other staff, as well as a representative from the local authority
- scrutinised your school's safeguarding procedures
- observed classroom activities jointly with you, spoke with pupils about their learning during lessons and listened to them read
- took into account 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 32 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and met with parents informally in the playground at the start of the school day
- scrutinised documentation, including assessment and behaviour information, the single central record of pre-employment checks, policies and procedures, and minutes of governing body meetings.