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Manjit Dulay
Headteacher
Alexandra Primary School
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Dear Ms Dulay

Short inspection of Alexandra Primary 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your team ensure that there is a culture of high expectations among staff. Strong teamwork underpins recent successes, with staff happily supporting each other to improve their teaching. You lead the school with a strong conviction and a very clear vision. Staff and governors fully share your aims.

Together with other school leaders and governors, you have met well the challenges of teacher recruitment and turnover over the past 12 months. Guidance and support systems enable teachers who are new to the school to become effective practitioners quickly. Parents largely agree that their children are taught well.

You, senior leaders and governors know the school well. Teaching and learning are kept continually under the spotlight through rigorous monitoring and careful tracking of pupils' progress.

The new leadership team has tackled robustly the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Together, you have addressed the dip in pupils' achievement. Pupils' progress is now more rapid, and attainment is rising. Another area for improvement at the previous inspection was attendance, which is now rising and is close to average.

You engage regularly with the local authority and others to provide an independent view of the school's performance. The school is now closely involved in local

partnerships which have helped considerably to improve provision in both reading and mathematics.

Governors use their detailed understanding of the school to question leaders closely and challenge them to improve teaching and pupils' achievement further. They recognise the challenge of staff recruitment and know that you seek continually to improve the quality of teaching. They challenged the school over the recent decline in progress in mathematics and reading, and have checked carefully that the corner has now been turned in both areas.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. You have ensured that all of the staff team implement these arrangements rigorously by giving them the highest priority. Training makes sure everyone is continually vigilant and fully aware of the dangers facing vulnerable families and individual pupils.

In addition to regular training, you use weekly sessions to discuss specific safeguarding issues such as 'grooming' and 'sexting'. Weekly meetings of the leadership team are vigilant in considering the issues that have emerged for vulnerable pupils.

Calls home on the first day of a pupil's absence mean the school can keep track of any pupils who might be at risk or who may have gone missing. The destinations of leavers are thoroughly checked, including if they have gone abroad. Your team alerts appropriate agencies very promptly at the slightest concern.

Inspection findings

- During my visit I checked the impact of recent changes to teaching programmes for reading. My conclusion is that progress has improved considerably and attainment is rising. Pupils explore texts in depth and take meaning from their reading. They are developing wider reading skills rapidly, such as inference and deduction. More broadly, the school's success in promoting reading is reflected in its status as a hub for other schools to visit and learn from.
- Effective teaching of phonics is leading to good progress and above-average attainment by the end of Year 1. Your reintroduction of the phonics teaching programme to Year 2 is also making a significant difference. Daily reading for Year 1 pupils in small groups with a trained adult is helping to widen their skills. Pupils are very keen and engaged in these sessions and are starting to develop a real enjoyment of reading.
- You and other leaders provide regular training for staff. This has enabled new programmes to be up and running quickly. However, several teachers are relatively new to the school, and they need time to develop their skills and expertise fully. You have identified that more work is needed to ensure that all teachers understand how progression can be achieved when listening to

individual pupils read.

- The previous inspection highlighted that pupils were not making the same good progress in mathematics as in reading and writing. This was also evident in the 2016 Year 6 national test results. However, the judgement from my visit is that this is no longer the case. Pupils are making good and improving progress. This is because you and your team have worked tirelessly to improve teaching. The school's programme of staff training, including work with a local hub for mathematics, has also helped to improve the quality of teaching.
- School assessment information shows pupils make good progress in developing and mastering key mathematical skills. This is confirmed by the work in pupils' books and observation in classrooms. Teaching gives time for pupils to secure new skills, including learning efficient methods of calculation. Pupils have regular opportunities to apply their skills when solving problems.
- More effective teaching than in the past gives pupils the opportunity to develop and explain their mathematical reasoning. However, as leaders have identified, not all teachers plan sufficiently for pupils to deepen their understanding or expect them to explain how they have arrived at a particular answer. At times, pupils undertake many questions requiring them to practise a skill they have already mastered. This takes time away from looking at more challenging material.
- I also examined the progress of the disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding. I looked at this in the light of the 2016 test results and because the evaluation of the impact of spending on the school's website was unclear. My judgement is that these pupils now make good progress as the result of the improvement in teaching across the school this year. Teachers are very clear who the disadvantaged pupils are in their classes and focus their attention sharply on increasing their rates of progress.
- You and your team give careful attention to raising the aspirations and meeting the needs of the most able disadvantaged pupils. This includes making sure that teaching challenges them and extends their thinking. You enrich their experiences and widen their horizons considerably, for example by theatre trips and enterprise activities.
- The change you have made to the way the impact of spending is evaluated has led to much greater attention being paid to individual pupils. Leaders and governors are becoming much clearer about what works best. Weekly meetings to check the progress of supported pupils help you to alter provision quickly when it proves less effective.
- I also looked at the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was because the 2016 Year 6 test results suggested their progress had slowed. Evidence that I gathered indicates that, overall, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities mostly make good progress.
- You and your team ensure that expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remain high among teachers and teaching assistants. Support programmes are carefully matched to individual needs, and their impact is monitored regularly alongside targets for individual pupils. The

school has adopted a wide range of support programmes including engaging a specialist in speech and language. Notably, too, pupils are also expected to work and make decisions on their own when appropriate.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning and deepen their understanding of new mathematical ideas
- training continues to ensure that all teachers understand how progression can be achieved when listening to individual pupils read.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

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

- Is the school's provision for reading sufficiently effective to ensure that pupils make good progress, particularly at key stage 2?
- Has the school taken sufficiently robust action to improve outcomes in mathematics?
- Is the pupil premium being used effectively to promote better progress for disadvantaged pupils in reading and mathematics?
- Why does provision for pupils receiving support for their special educational needs appear not to be leading to them making good progress?

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

- I met you and your deputy headteacher, as well as other members of staff with leadership responsibilities. I met the chair of the governing body and one other governor. I also had a meeting with a local authority adviser.
- You accompanied me when I visited parts of lessons. I also observed pupils as they moved around the school. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' mathematics books. I met with two groups of pupils and heard three of them read. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school and took account of the 17 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

- I considered the school's analysis of pupils' recent performance. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training and safeguarding checks.