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Raphael Moss
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Moss

Short inspection of Elsley 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, your leaders and governors are managing the rapid expansion in pupil numbers and the increase in staffing well. You have formed a strong team of senior leaders who are supporting you effectively in moving the school forward.

You are very clear about what needs to be done to strengthen teaching and learning further. You have thorough systems that provide specific next steps for improvement. Leaders support and challenge teachers and trainees successfully.

You have improved teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Work in pupils' books shows that they do well because they have a clear understanding of what they should do to improve their work. Teaching assistants are well trained and work closely with the teachers to ensure that pupils receive the help they need to make good progress.

Leaders have improved provision for the most able pupils. There remain a few missed opportunities for the most able pupils in key stage 1 to learn at greater depth in mathematics. Occasionally, a few activities for the children in the early years provision are not sufficiently engaging and challenging.

Parents are very positive about the school and greatly appreciate the supportive teachers. The school's core values of 'learning, sharing, achieving and respecting' are evident in the pupils' considerate behaviour and in the pride they show in their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Members of staff are checked for suitability for working in school and are fully trained. They deal with any concerns about the safety of pupils quickly and thoroughly. Parents, pupils and members of staff are positive about how well the school looks after its pupils.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and know how to stay safe. For example, they understand that certain parts of the school grounds are out of bounds during the building expansion and that they need to be careful when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- The inspection followed four key lines of enquiry in addition to checking safeguarding arrangements. I explored the progress of children in the early years provision, including when they are working outside. Outdoor provision was an area for improvement at the previous inspection and the 2016 national assessments showed a decline in attainment for Reception children from 2015.
- School information shows that children who join the school in the Nursery or at the start of the Reception Year do well. Last year saw the first expansion from two to four classes in the Reception Year. New children joined the school throughout the year. This influx had a major impact on the end-of-year assessments in 2016, and does not reflect the good progress these children made. Inspection evidence confirms that children made good progress last year from different starting points.
- During the inspection, the early years provision was in temporary accommodation and members of staff were making the best use of a small outdoor area. I found that most activities indoors and outside motivated the children to want to learn and supported good progress. A few activities provided insufficient interest or challenge to support good learning.
- I also looked at the challenge for the most able pupils at key stage 1 in writing and mathematics, and the progress of girls in reading at key stage 2. These groups of pupils did less well than their peers in 2016. I found that girls and boys of differing abilities all do well in writing. You and your leaders have been successful in training your staff and they now teach this subject well. Pupils across the school write at length and are skilled in correcting and improving their own work. As one pupil said, 'I think about it. I don't just write it.'
- I found that the most able pupils in key stage 1 complete more difficult work than the other pupils in mathematics. However, teachers miss some opportunities to deepen the knowledge and understanding of these pupils.
- During the inspection, girls in Year 6 demonstrated that they read fluently and with good understanding. Your assessment information shows that there is no difference in the progress of girls and boys this year.
- I noticed that in 2016 pupils did not all do as well as they should in phonics by the end of Year 2. I found that phonics is now being taught well across key stage 1 and that pupils are successful in using their knowledge to help them with reading and spelling.

- I noted that boys did better than girls in mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2016. Girls and boys are doing equally well this year. You provide successful workshops to support the less confident pupils and their parents so that they understand how to solve problems and make calculations.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- activities for the children in the early years are always engaging and challenging
- teachers provide activities that deepen the knowledge and understanding of the most able pupils in mathematics at key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

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

- the progress of children in the early years provision, including when working outside
- the challenge for the most able pupils in writing and mathematics at key stage 1 and the progress of girls in reading at key stage 2
- the progress of pupils in phonics at key stage 1
- how leaders have secured strong outcomes for boys in mathematics at key stage 2.

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

- observations of teaching and learning across the school during learning walks with you and other senior leaders
- meetings with leaders and members of the governing body
- informal discussions with parents and the scrutiny of 26 responses to Parent View and the questionnaire responses of 22 members of staff
- consideration of a range of information supplied by the school, including checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan and records relating to attendance and safeguarding procedures
- listening to pupils read.