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Miss Katrina Mildner
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Mildner

Short inspection of Pinner Park Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Despite some staff turnover, your decisive leadership and the strong support of staff and governors have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You have dealt with the recommendations from the previous inspection report well. The previous inspection found that some pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly those with higher ability, did not achieve as well as they should. Progress for this group of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is typically in line with national averages. Inspectors also found that the most able were not sufficiently challenged in lessons. Teachers now provide a good level of challenge in lessons. The most able pupils are always keen to pick the hardest task because they understand that it will give them the greatest opportunity to practise and develop their skills. As a result, the current most able pupils, including the girls, are making good progress.

You have focused on developing key attitudes that help pupils learn effectively, including resilience and tenacity. Pupils are confident in discussing their learning. Pupils told me that they learn best by making mistakes. They are keen to put as much effort as possible into a piece of work so that the finished product is an accomplishment of which they can be proud.

Pupils are kind and considerate to each other and to adults, both in lessons and around the school. During the many opportunities they have to share ideas, they listen carefully to each other's views and justify their responses clearly. For example, during a classroom activity, pupils were deciding what characteristics a good teacher would need. They discussed whether teachers should give guidance that either provided challenge or an easy response. They listened to opposing views sensitively and negotiated expertly to reach a unanimous view in the end. This reflects pupils' well-developed sense of justice and impressive social skills.

Pupils read well and enjoy reading. Weak readers explain how they use their knowledge of the sounds that letters represent to help them tackle unfamiliar words. The most able readers make specific choices about the books they read. They answer complex questions about what they read and can talk with precision about what has helped them develop their reading skills so well over time.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They say that transition is good and that pupils are well supported when they join in Year 3. Where pupils arrive other than at the beginning of Year 3, everyone at the school makes them welcome so they settle very quickly. This is because the school promotes harmonious relationships and places great emphasis on respect and valuing diversity.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that concerns are logged in a detailed and systematic way. Staff receive up-to-date training, including about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Pupils learn about how to use technology, including mobile devices, safely. There is a range of safeguarding guidance for parents on the school's website and leaders run workshops to provide additional guidance. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, agreed that their children feel safe in school. Parents that I spoke to at the start of the school day shared this view.

Governors are active in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are robust. Safeguarding is always discussed at full governing body meetings. All pre-employment checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children meet statutory requirements. The governing body monitors these checks carefully.

Inspection findings

- You and the leadership team have continued to focus on improving outcomes for the most able, which rose following the previous inspection. In 2016, the proportion of most-able pupils who reached the higher standard was above the national average in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 6. However, in writing, the progress of the most able pupils was slower than the national average and, consequently, the proportion who reached the high standard was below average.

- Leaders have quickly put in place a range of effective measures to ensure that standards rise again. For example, a concerted approach to developing vocabulary and sentence structure has resulted in pupils writing in a fluent and sophisticated style. The most able pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, disadvantaged pupils and girls, use words precisely to express their ideas. Pupils told me exactly why they had chosen words such as 'foal' and 'majestic' as opposed to 'horse' and 'grand'. They understand, and can explain, the difference between formal English and informal language, such as slang, and know which to use in the correct context.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to write at length about subjects that interest them. Pupils have experience of organising their writing and producing a coherent ending to their stories. This helps them develop stamina and ensures that they get to complete long pieces of work. Pupils also use a range of different sentence types, which ensures that their writing flows well. Books show how pupils' handwriting continues to improve apace. Work is neat, legible and consistently well presented.
- The school's assessment information shows that current pupils, including the most able girls and disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in writing. The scrutiny of pupils' written work that I completed also supports the school's view.
- On occasion, however, more simple errors, such as omission of basic punctuation or misuse of capital letters, go unnoticed by teachers. In such cases, this prevents pupils from reaching the high standards of which they are capable.
- I evaluated the impact of leaders' actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This was because outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in 2016 were below those for other pupils nationally. You have implemented a range of initiatives to promote strong progress for this group.
- Leaders use the outcomes from national research to ensure that the pupil premium funding is well deployed. For example, by identifying what pupils are interested in individually and creating a tailored package of support, leaders ensure that provision meets pupils' specific needs. Assessment information and work in pupils' books confirm that disadvantaged pupils are doing increasingly well. The differences between their progress and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- I looked at leaders' actions to improve the attendance of different groups of pupils. This is because although attendance overall is close to the national average, there are some differences, particularly for pupils who receive free school meals.
- Leaders ensure that there is a strong focus on promoting good attendance. The school's work to support pupils who are frequently absent, and their families, has led to improved attendance rates. However, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals who are persistently absent is still higher than that for all pupils nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of persistent absence for pupils who are eligible for free school meals reduce towards those of all pupils nationally
- all teachers consistently correct basic errors in pupils' punctuation and spelling so that pupils reach the high standards of written work of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeanie Jovanova
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with you, the senior management team, middle leaders, pupils and representatives from the governing body, including the chair of the governing body
- a telephone discussion with the school improvement partner
- visits to writing lessons in all year groups
- listening to a small group of pupils reading
- a meeting with a group of pupils from across the school to discuss their writing
- informal discussions with pupils in lessons
- conversations with a range of parents as they dropped their children off in the morning
- scrutiny of work in books
- evaluation of information provided by the school, including safeguarding records, minutes of governing body meetings, behaviour logs, attendance information, the school's assessment of its performance and information about pupils' progress
- taking into account the views of 62 responses to Parent View and 38 responses to the staff survey.