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Mr Steven Scott
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Dear Mr Scott

Short inspection of Banstead Community Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 June 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 have a very good understanding of the needs of the school and the community it serves. You focus on meeting the needs of the 'whole child'. This is shown, for example, in the development of the outside space and the opportunities created by the new building, which enhance the entire curriculum. Pupils value the well-kept gardens in which they can read and attend the gardening club. The music and art and design spaces are well equipped and used so that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are effectively developed across the curriculum. In this way, pupils are well prepared to benefit from the next stage of their education.

Pupils and parents value the wide range of opportunities provided by the school, including lots of clubs. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning across the curriculum, as I saw in different activities including making clay pots and calculating fractions. They particularly enjoy opportunities provided by extended writing, which they take forward enthusiastically in their homework. Pupils behave well. They are polite and friendly. Relationships across the school are warm, relaxed and respectful. These relationships are modelled by staff at all levels. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, commented on the happy atmosphere of the school, which, as one said, is 'almost palpable'. Another parental comment, which was typical of those received, stated, 'Banstead Juniors has taught all of my children to be respectful, kind and, most importantly, to enjoy learning and to try their best at all times.'

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors recognised the many strengths of the school, including good progress and standards in Year 6. In 2016, Year 6 attainment levels remained above those of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, although pupils' progress, from very high starting points, was not as strong. However, the progress information that leaders provided for me during the inspection, and examples of current pupils' work, presented compelling evidence of good progress from different starting points.

Inspectors also identified the need to develop teaching and achievement, particularly in mathematics, and the skills of middle leaders. Leaders have addressed all of these areas effectively. In 2016, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected or high standard in mathematics was better than the national average. Work in books shows good progress from starting points in mathematics, and that pupils develop good skills in mathematical reasoning. Leaders at all levels track progress carefully and take swift action to provide additional help when required.

The leadership of English and mathematics across the school is particularly strong. These leaders have benefited from effective support from both senior leaders and the local authority. This has enabled them to develop the skill and confidence to support teaching and target appropriate areas for improvement across the school. Leaders look at pupils' books, observe teaching and regularly analyse progress information so that they understand what is working well and what needs to improve. This information is shared at staff meetings and built into school improvement documents.

School leaders and governors are not complacent. You have accurately identified the correct key priorities for further improvement and are taking the right actions to address them. You know that the progress of disadvantaged pupils needs to improve and are putting in a range of effective support to achieve this. The focus on raising attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar has been effective. This is evident in the emphasis given to it in teaching and in pupils' writing books. However, you know that these high expectations are not yet evident in work across the wider curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils' safety is of paramount importance to everyone at the school. Pupils feel safe. All of the parents who completed Parent View responded that their child feels safe at school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to keep themselves safe is effectively developed by activities such as the recent e-safety week. Pupils trust adults at the school to act to keep them safe. They are confident that if bullying did occur it 'would be sorted out immediately'.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Concerns are reported, recorded and acted on in a timely manner. The inclusion manager ensures that any referrals to outside agencies are followed up, and that appropriate support for pupils and their families is in place. Attendance is good. Leaders are engaging proactively with local schools and strengthening the local alliance to ensure that they have a comprehensive and accurate picture of pupils' needs before they start at the school.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on key lines of enquiry which we agreed. The first of these was the use of pupil premium funding to accelerate rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, the small number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made much slower progress than other pupils nationally. Furthermore, at the time of the inspection, the school's website did not fully explain the wide range of support available for these pupils, and the considerable impact that this has on improving their attendance, well-being and attainment.
- School leaders have put in place a wide range of effective support to enable disadvantaged pupils to make good progress in English and mathematics. This includes a computer club with a mathematics focus, and lunchtime book clubs. Small-group work helps pupils to make better progress and catch up. Leaders monitor pupils' progress carefully and adjust groupings as necessary. You provided information that showed the good rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils in most year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. This was reflected in the work that we saw in pupils' books.
- Even though the most able disadvantaged pupils are making good progress, further support such as the 'brilliant club' for mathematics and peer mentoring is planned. Leaders are aware of the need for continued focus to ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is maintained and further developed.
- We also focused on reading. Although reading was identified as a strength of the school in the previous inspection, in 2016, Year 6 pupils had not made the good progress seen in previous years at the end of key stage 2. Leaders responded swiftly to this, analysing test results to identify areas of relative weakness and taking appropriate action to address them. As a result, current information shows that progress in reading is good.
- In 2016, Year 6 pupils who had special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make good progress in reading. However, current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making rapid progress from their starting points. This is because of highly effective support developing their understanding of phonics and other reading skills, which are woven into their small-group support sessions.

- High expectations of reading permeate all levels of school life. Information texts that pupils are presented with are of sufficient length and complexity to provide challenge. Pupils relish the many opportunities provided for them during the day to read, and appreciate the well-stocked school library. They talk with enthusiasm about their favourite authors and characters.
- We also looked at the work of leaders and governors to improve standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar across the school. The English leader has supported teachers in ensuring that expectations are high. Teachers use skilled questioning effectively so that pupils understand grammatical terminology and can apply their understanding in their writing. While this focus on basic literacy skills is evident in writing books, similarly high expectations are not yet always seen in other curriculum areas.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the progress of disadvantaged pupils increases to be in line with other pupils nationally
- high expectations in spelling, punctuation and grammar seen in writing books become more evident in written work across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Gordon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you, the chair of the governing body, the inclusion manager and English and mathematics leaders. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I analysed a range of documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I observed pupils around the school, as they came into school and in their classes. Together we visited 11 classes and one special support class. In the classes, I observed teaching, looked at books, spoke to pupils about their work and listened to them read. I also met with pupils to get their views of the school. I took account of 74 responses by parents to Parent View, including written responses.