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Miss Joanne Preston
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Dear Miss Preston

Short inspection of Gascoigne Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 2017 with James Hollinsley, Ofsted Inspector, 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 July 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 took up post in September 2015 at an exciting and very important time for the school community. You have overseen the ongoing expansion of the school and the completion of extensive building work. The school now has two sites to accommodate the increasing roll. There are currently seven forms of entry in the Reception Year and this is set to continue through to Year 6.

You have managed the significant changes to staffing effectively. There are 46 teaching staff, and almost half of these joined the school since your appointment. Together with governors and the local authority, you have worked extremely hard to recruit the right people, and the school is now fully staffed with permanent teachers. Despite the significant challenges that school expansion, building works and staff turnover brings, you have ensured that all pupils continue to get a good education. Improvements to teaching and learning continue to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection through your well-thought-out plans. Together with your leadership team, you have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching. For example, you have established a 'Good Learning for All' programme to develop and refine teaching skills and strategies throughout the school. You and other leaders model good teaching and learning, and work together in well-organised teams to focus carefully on pupils' achievements. Your staff have worked effectively with other

schools in the trust to improve the quality of reading across the school. You acknowledge that the new initiatives need time to embed throughout the school. Not all teachers share the same very high expectations of pupils in reading to enable a greater proportion of pupils, particularly those who have average and below average starting points, to reach the standards expected in each year group.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors provide increasing levels of challenge to school leaders and have a clear picture about pupils' achievement. Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Parents are extremely positive about you and your staff. Responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, show that an overwhelming majority would recommend the school to others.

Staff are supportive of the changes you are making. They feel valued and appreciate the ongoing opportunities for professional development that you provide. Staff morale is high, and there is a shared sense of purpose to enable all pupils to achieve their best.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Governors fulfil their statutory duties related to safeguarding and ensure that all recruitment procedures are robust. The checks that are made on the suitability of staff meet statutory requirements.

There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe in school. All staff take their roles and responsibilities seriously. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe from harm. Leaders ensure that training for all staff and governors is up to date and in line with the latest guidance. Staff take part in additional sessions that focus on the context of the school community. For example, you have organised extra workshops relating to female genital mutilation and on domestic violence so that staff understand what to do if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare.

You provide pupils with opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe through lessons, assemblies and special events. These, together with a strong focus on getting pupils to talk about their concerns, enable pupils to be aware of potential dangers when they are outside school. Your commitment to all pupils and their families is clear for all to see. The school's work with the most vulnerable pupils is a strength. The newly formed nurture teams are making a real difference to pupils' well-being, and the number of fixed term exclusions, for example, has reduced markedly.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the day we agreed to focus on three aspects of the school's work. The first aspect related to pupils' achievements in reading. This was because last

year, pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 was weaker than writing and mathematics. Furthermore, attainment in reading was below the national average in both key stage 1 and key stage 2.

- Over the past year, you have raised the profile of reading significantly. Displays and classrooms promote reading well, and you have invested in purchasing high-quality texts that are appropriate for pupils' ages. Reading areas are bright and exciting places to be.
- You have introduced a new approach to group reading that emphasises pupils' comprehension skills. Pupils are positive about the new approaches. Year 2 pupils, for example, told me that reading is more interesting now and that they enjoy asking and answering harder questions.
- Reading is well promoted throughout the school, starting in the early years. Pupils' reading skills are taught effectively and systematically. Parents are involved in their children's reading, for example with the 'reading champions' programme to encourage pupils to read widely and develop stamina in their reading. Your assessment information shows that pupils in all year groups, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress in reading.
- The second key line of enquiry focused on disadvantaged pupils in the school because, in 2016, there were some differences between the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school.
- Your work to support the most vulnerable pupils and the disadvantaged pupils is a strength of the school. The nurture teams, learning mentors, family liaison practitioners and other staff work tirelessly to ensure that the needs of the disadvantaged pupils are met. The work of these teams has improved the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, increased parental engagement and supported the progress these pupils are making in class.
- Leaders track the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully and provide additional support, such as through interventions or small group teaching, to identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning. Inspection evidence confirms that disadvantaged pupils are making equally good progress as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. The most recent assessment information shows that any differences in attainment are diminishing quickly, and that a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils are working at the expected standards in each year group.
- The third line of enquiry related to pupils' attendance. Although overall attendance had improved last year to be in line with the national average, the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals, boys and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was below the national average.
- As the school roll expanded rapidly at the start of this year, pupils took up places from further afield, with some travelling long distances to come to school. You and other members of staff have worked exceptionally well to support families and pupils to attend regularly and arrive on time each day. Consequently, the attendance of some pupils has improved significantly, including those eligible for free school meals. However, the attendance of pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average and has not improved as well as it has for other groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities improves, so that it is at least in line with the national average
- all teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' achievements in reading, so that a greater proportion of pupils, including those who have average and below average starting points, reach the expected standards in reading in each year group.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Rawlings
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and other senior leaders throughout the day. The lead inspector also met with a group of governors and the local authority link adviser. The inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the day, during lessons and at play time, and an inspector heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 reading. Inspectors evaluated the school's documentation related to safeguarding and pupils' achievement, and scrutinised information about pupils' attendance and behaviour. Meetings were held with the designated safeguarding lead and a scrutiny of the single central record of employment checks was completed. Inspectors made visits to lessons in all year groups, on both sites, accompanied by the deputy headteachers. They looked at minutes from governing body meetings and evaluated the 57 responses to the online staff survey and 31 responses to the pupil survey. Inspectors considered 170 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.