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Miss Amanda Conner  
Headteacher  
Gidea Park Primary School  
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Dear Miss Conner

### **Short inspection of Gidea Park Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Since your promotion to headteacher in September 2016, you have worked with great determination to maintain the good quality of education in the school. The additional internal appointment of the deputy headteacher has ensured the stability of the school's senior leadership through the recent expansion of the school. Leaders, including governors, know the school well. They understand its strengths and are open and honest about areas for improvement. The middle leadership team is a mixture of experienced staff and those relatively new to their posts. They are clear about the part they play in developing teachers' practice and supporting improvement. We agreed that they need sufficient time to embed the initiatives identified for raising pupils' achievement.

The areas for development identified at the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Improvements in teaching have had a positive impact on pupils' involvement in their learning. Productive use of time in lessons ensures that pupils make good progress. The 2016 results show that by the end of Year 6, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard or above in reading, writing and mathematics continues to be above the national averages.

Leaders identify rightly that pupils' progress has been less successful in reading.

Leaders are already taking effective action to raise standards in reading so that they are similar to those in writing and mathematics. Each year group now has high-quality core texts to study over the year. As a result, pupils are developing a love of reading widely across a range of genres. Work seen in books shows that pupils are developing their reading skills well. The school's current performance information suggests that all pupils, including the most able, are making faster progress. As a result, the differences between attainment in English and mathematics are diminishing, particularly in key stage 2.

Teaching assistants make valuable contributions to pupils' progress. Training for support staff ensures that the growing number of pupils entering the school with low levels of English language quickly catch up with their English-speaking peers.

Pupils have a good understanding of a range of cultures in the wider community. Pupils learn about different faiths and visit a variety of places of worship. The school's successful work during their 'Year of Respect' has developed pupils' respect for each other and also for adults. Pupils from different cultures are now confident in sharing their experiences with their peers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders' procedures for vetting staff are robust. The safeguarding link governor checks the school's records and processes regularly to ensure that the full governing body fulfils its statutory duty well. Training that covers recent government guidelines, including the understanding of female genital mutilation and the identification of signs that pupils may be at risk of extremism, is up to date. Staff are confident in using the school's procedures for raising concerns. In your role as designated lead for safeguarding, you follow up slow responses from outside agencies promptly to ensure that you have the correct information to keep pupils safe.

Pupils know how to assess risks online. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the wider implications of sharing personal information. They appreciate the work of school staff to keep them safe in school. This has been a priority during the school's recent building work. Parents agree and are supportive of the school's work to help their children keep safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first key line of enquiry focused on the safeguarding procedures in school. I checked that governors were clear about the school's system for improving attendance. I looked at outcomes for groups of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
  
- The inclusion leader analyses pupils' attendance information regularly. The home

school worker works effectively with families whose children's absence is a concern. Medical appointments and also periods when pupils have been hospitalised have affected attendance. Governors have clear oversight of the school's support for vulnerable families and understand the impact that this support has had. Currently the overall attendance is 96.5%, which is in line with the national average.

- I then looked at the school's strategy for pupil premium spending. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standards by the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was below national averages in 2016. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 was also below the national average.
- Leaders, including governors, identified reading as a school priority quickly. They put plans in place to ensure that pupils who did not achieve as well as expected by the end of Year 1, catch up. The pass rate by the end of Year 2 was 98% in 2016. Similarly, the group of disadvantaged pupils in Year 3 receive additional phonic support and are now on track to meet their age-related expectations in reading. Books seen show this to be the case and the disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are making good progress. Pupils observed in class read challenging texts fluently and with growing confidence. Additional phonic group support for pupils new to speaking English has resulted in an improvement in the proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who are on track to meet the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Leaders have put actions in place for pupils to ensure that a greater proportion reach the higher standards in reading by the end of Year 6. Consequently, teachers are improving the level of challenge for all pupils, especially the most able. Work in pupils' books shows that progress is strong. The school's own assessment information shows that a higher number of pupils are attaining above age-related expectations in reading throughout the school.
- Finally, I looked at the actions leaders have taken to improve the progress of girls in reading. In 2016, the proportion of girls meeting and exceeding expected standards in reading was below national averages.
- Leaders had also identified that girls were not fully engaging in their mathematics lessons. As a result, performance targets were set to ensure that girls improved their confidence to contribute in lessons. The school decided to trial single-sex classes for some lessons. Leaders also used the physical education and sport premium funding to increase the girls' participation in competitive sports. As a result, they have strengthened their resilience and participate more in class, particularly in mathematics lessons. Any historical gender difference in attainment, including for the most able girls, is being addressed successfully. Books show that there is little gender difference in attainment and progress in reading and mathematics. Pupils talk confidently and maturely about the difference this has made to girls' contributions in class discussions.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders continue to be developed in their roles, so that they can embed further improvements to increase the proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding the national standards, particularly in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morgan  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I carried out the following activities:

- met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders
- held a meeting with five members of the governing body
- met with the local authority representative
- met with a group of pupils from Reception to Year 6 to seek their views of the school
- reviewed a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; and information about pupils' progress, the governing body, and pupils' attendance. The school's single central record, pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures were also reviewed
- scrutinised a sample of books from Reception to Year 6 with the headteacher and deputy headteacher
- the school's website was scrutinised to confirm that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information
- considered 70 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 40 responses to the online staff survey and 36 responses to the online pupil survey
- visited lessons in all classes with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.