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Ms Maria Keenan
Headteacher
Pelham Primary School
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Dear Ms Keenan

Short inspection of Pelham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 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, your leadership team and governors have created a school in which pupils feel safe and happy and are eager to learn. Staff know each of the pupils well, and parents are appreciative of the individual care and support that their children receive.

As a result of the expansion of the school, you have recruited and successfully nurtured and developed a competent team of teachers. You have established an effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics. At the same time, you have made sure that teachers have suitable plans for teaching other subjects. As a result, pupils engage in an interesting and varied curriculum, which typically promotes effective learning.

Partnerships with the local authority are productive and the many strengths of the school are recognised. The local authority particularly values the school's work with external agencies and is hopeful that you will be able to disseminate your good practice to other schools.

Your partnership with the governing body is strong. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities diligently and know the school well. They were able to discuss with accuracy the school's strengths and areas that need developing. It is clear that they hold you and other leaders appropriately to account for improving the work of the school.

Pupils show good attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well and use every opportunity to improve their skills in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are articulate and read well. All pupils spoken to during the inspection were very positive about every aspect of school life. They are proud to be part of the whole school family. Parents also value the good quality of education that your school provides. The vast majority were overwhelmingly positive in their responses to me and to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. Parents particularly value the way you provide high-quality care and guidance for their children.

At the school's previous inspection, the area identified for improvement was to make more teaching outstanding. You and your team have worked tirelessly to ensure that the quality of teaching is of the highest calibre. You have ensured that there is rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and provided effective training opportunities for staff on ways to improve their delivery. As a result, this has improved the learning outcomes for pupils at all key stages.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Governors and staff understand their responsibilities well and are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are kept safe and well. Statutory guidelines are followed regarding safeguarding policies and procedures and the staff receive well-considered training on how to ensure that the policy is implemented effectively.

The school's work on anti-bullying is effective in supporting pupils' understanding of different types of bullying and how to prevent it. The pupils spoke about this being a 'telling school', where pupils are comfortable in sharing their concerns with teachers. Pupils take part in online safety workshops, which ensure that they are aware of the dangers of the internet. Parents are also offered support in this area, through meetings.

Inspection findings

- Changes in the structure of the school's leadership team have been well thought through. Leaders are clear about their responsibilities and have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further. All leaders and governors are very motivated and keen to play their part in moving the school forward.
- You and your leaders have identified that girls do not make as much progress as boys in writing, and that girls' outcomes in writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 were not as strong as those seen in reading. I also identified this as an area for investigation. You explained that the school has addressed this issue as seen in the stronger progress in pupils' books. My observations confirm that pupils are given plentiful opportunities to write in different styles. Nonetheless, some pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work.

- The second line of enquiry looked at pupils' achievement in key stage 1. In 2016, there was a dip in the results in reading, writing and mathematics. You have made effective improvements to the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress at key stage 1. As a result, current pupils are making stronger progress from their starting points than was the case last year. However, you are in agreement with me that more could be done to ensure that pupils are taught problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics more effectively.
- A third aspect of this inspection examined pupils' achievement in phonics. The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 has been below national averages for the last three years. You have taken appropriate action to address this. The school now provides effective phonics teaching, including additional challenge for the most able pupils. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to motivate and challenge all groups of pupils. As a result, the school's information shows that pupils are now achieving well. Pupils read with accuracy and fluency.
- The final line of enquiry explored current attendance rates. In 2016, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was below the national level. Leaders and all staff have worked tirelessly to improve this situation. Their work has been successful. Currently, the attendance of those who are eligible for pupil premium funding has increased and the number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced.
- Classrooms are happy places. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive because of the good quality of teaching and the wide range of interesting things they learn about. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive and respectful. During a discussion with a group of pupils, one pupil said, 'No one gets left behind because our teachers help us to learn and achieve.'
- The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. School leaders have developed effective systems to monitor the quality of teaching, which has shown marked improvement over the last two years, leading to better outcomes for all pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils are encouraged to focus on the presentation of their work and handwriting
- you provide more opportunities for pupils in key stage 1 to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Merton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Danvir Visvanathan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities:

- a scrutiny of the single central record of recruitment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the school's safeguarding policy and other policies relating to behavior and attendance
- meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders and three governors
- a review of the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans
- observations of learning across the school, and work analysis in pupils' writing and mathematics books
- observations of pupils in a range of situations, including at break- and lunchtime
- conversations with a group of pupils and with pupils in lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall
- listening to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read
- I took into account 66 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 59 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 16 responses to the staff survey.