

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



30 May 2017

Michelle Akarsu  
Headteacher  
The Mulberry Primary School  
Parkhurst Road  
Tottenham  
London  
N17 9RB

Dear Mrs Akarsu

### **Short inspection of The Mulberry Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 2017 with Sheila Cohring, 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 March 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 provided strong leadership as acting headteacher and subsequently as substantive headteacher, since being appointed in January 2015. You have set high expectations for leaders and teachers and hold all staff to account for their work. You have made extensive changes to staffing and have overseen the recruitment of an effective leadership team. This team is skilled in supporting staff to improve their practice, particularly in the teaching of English.

The behaviour of pupils in lessons and in the playground is good and is a strength of the school. Relationships between pupils, teachers and other staff are respectful and positive. The school knows the needs of its individual pupils very well. Pupils spoken to are polite and said that good behaviour is expected of them at all times.

You are well supported by a strong leadership team. Together, you have taken decisive action to improve the quality of the teaching of reading in all key stages. Your team members share a common understanding of what needs to be done to improve the skills of the teaching of reading. You have provided appropriate training and professional development to enable staff to improve the standards of reading and to support pupils to apply their knowledge of grammar in their work. Leaders now hold teachers to account for the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. However, relatively few pupils are reaching the higher standards in reading in key stages 1 and 2, and this is an area for further improvement in the school.

You have committed the school to providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders have maintained good provision in the early years both indoors and in the outside areas. Pupils read for pleasure and said how much they enjoy the opportunities to read provided in the school.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the leadership of the school. Parent View and the school's own surveys showed that all parents would recommend this school to others. Discussions with parents, as well as responses to surveys, show that they recognise and appreciate the changes you have made to the school building and particularly to the quality of teaching. Links with parents are strong and the school offers a wide variety of workshops and courses in learning English, phonics and parenting skills.

The governing body has a wide range of relevant skills and experience to support leaders. Governors are reflective and have high aspirations for all pupils and the school community.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding records, including the single central record, are detailed and maintained to a high standard. The school is vigilant in ensuring that records are in compliance with all statutory requirements. Governors regularly audit the school's single central record and pre-employment checks on new staff.

Staff receive safeguarding training at the start of the academic year. They are kept informed about recent safeguarding guidance and know what to do if they have any concerns. The school has ensured that staff are well trained to enable them to be clear about their duties around such issues as online safety, radicalisation and local gang culture.

Pupils are kept safe and said that they feel safe in school. The school has made extensive changes to its safeguarding practices since your appointment as the substantive headteacher. The 23 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe and happy in school. The pupils said that they feel safe in the playgrounds and they know who to approach if they are concerned about bullying or personal safety.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have focused on improving pupils' reading skills, especially in key stage 2. The school rightly identified a significant dip in the 2016 reading assessments; this was particularly evident for the middle-attaining pupils. This was my first line of enquiry. You have taken swift and decisive action with your leadership team to address this issue. Leaders have visited other schools and local authorities and sought appropriate support. As a result, in September 2016 you introduced new reading programmes in both key stages. You also invested in a wide range of new books and resources to change the way in which reading is taught.
  
- Your English leader has strengthened the provision for middle-attaining pupils in

reading by greater emphasis on the development of pupils' comprehension and grammar skills in key stage 2. Our visits to lessons showed that pupils are consistently asked to explain their thinking about the answers they give. Pupils are being taught the skills of analysing texts and making predictions and inferences. The English leader provides clear guidance and professional development to other staff across the school in the daily teaching of reading.

- In key stage 1, pupils take part in daily supported reading in groups. They build quickly on their phonics skills learned in the early years and Year 1. Texts are well matched to pupils' abilities, and this is helping to build key skills in reading. Pupils across the school told me that they enjoy reading and appreciate the wide range of books and texts available to them in class and in the school library. Home-school reading is being developed effectively and parent literacy workshops are regularly held in the early years. The school has taken great care to ensure that the new reading schemes encourage pupils to develop a love of reading for its own sake. In a key stage 1 class, pupils were reading poetry and in a key stage 2 class, Shakespeare's use of comic language was being discussed and analysed.
- Pupils in the school are making good progress in developing their reading skills as a result of the new focus on reading. The school's own assessment information currently shows improved outcomes for middle-attaining pupils. However, the most able pupils in key stage 1 are not developing the appropriate skills to read fluently and with expression.
- My second line of enquiry was about improving outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was a focus because of the 2016 reading outcomes in key stage 2, as well as the large number of pupils in the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. I also focused on the outcomes for the most able pupils as the proportion of pupils with high prior attainment was very low in the school in 2016, especially in key stage 1.
- Pupils in the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those in the resource base for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder, are making good progress from their starting points in all areas of the school. Leaders intervene at an early stage to identify pupils' needs and match interventions to meet their specific needs. In classes and in the resource base, we saw pupils being well supported by teachers and support staff. Pupils' needs are reviewed regularly and outcomes shared with parents. Parents spoke highly of the work of the school in supporting a wide range of complex needs. Pastoral support and links to outside agencies are well developed in this school.
- The school rightly made raising the standards of reading across the school its key priority for 2016. For such a large school, there are currently very low proportions of most-able pupils in all key stages. The new reading schemes are beginning to have an impact on challenging the middle-ability pupils. This was evident when talking to pupils about extending their vocabulary and ways in which they then apply this learning to the wider curriculum. However, further work needs to be done to challenge the most able pupils to attain higher outcomes, especially in reading.
- My third line of enquiry was in relation to safeguarding. I particularly looked at how vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are being kept safe. The school works well with a wide variety of external agencies to

ensure that the school is constantly monitoring safeguarding. The school has extensively modified its practice in the last few years. This includes the design of the buildings, movement around the school and transport to and from school. Records show early intervention, when the need arises, and a vigilant culture of safeguarding within the school.

- Leaders and governors responded well to the Ofsted monitoring inspection of safeguarding in November 2015. Governors have taken decisive action to ensure that all pupils are kept safe. However, they still need to ask more challenging questions of leaders during governing body meetings to ensure that they are held fully to account.
- The fourth line of enquiry concerned the attendance of pupils and also looked at those pupils who have persistent levels of absence. In 2016, pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan had high levels of absence. However, school records show that this is typically linked to complex, long-term medical needs. The strong leadership of the inclusion manager has seen a consistent rise in attendance for these pupils, so that overall attendance is now the same as the national average. Monitoring and tracking systems of attendance are robust. However, persistent absence overall is still above the national average, and the school has more work to do in this area.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers increase the challenge and raise expectations for the achievement of the most able pupils, particularly in reading
- they reduce further the level of persistent absence for all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Sean Flood  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, my colleague and I held discussions with you and other senior and middle leaders. I met a representative from the local authority and held a meeting with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. In addition, I spoke with parents and pupils, in class, in structured settings and in informal meetings. We heard a wide range of readers across the school in all key stages and in the resource base. I observed pupils' behaviour in class, in the playgrounds and as they made their way around the school. Inspectors scrutinised books and pupils' work. We also made visits to classes alongside senior leaders. We examined the school's new

reading provision and progress tracking information. A wide range of documentation concerning safeguarding and attendance was scrutinised. We also looked at behaviour and bullying incident logs. I considered the responses of 23 parents to Parent View and the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys and the school's own internal surveys.