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Ms Catherine Blackler
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Blackler

Short inspection of Avondale Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 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 September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have a clear vision for improvement, and high expectations of staff and pupils. Staff and governors share your expectations and drive to provide the best education for pupils.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school does for their children and for them. They appreciate how ambitious you are for their children and feel that their opinions are valued and acted upon. The school is a calm and nurturing environment where staff help pupils to develop well, both academically and personally. This supports pupils' confidence to learn and promotes high standards of behaviour.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the teaching of writing at key stage 2. In response, you have ensured that teachers have received effective training and that lessons have a sharp focus on pupils applying their writing skills independently. Consequently, in 2016, pupils' progress in writing was significantly above the national average at the end of key stage 2. A second area for improvement identified at the last inspection related to addressing pockets of underachievement in key stage 1. Since then, you have focused relentlessly on the quality of teaching and the development of your thematic curriculum as a means to promote opportunities for writing at length. As a result, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 1 are improving overall. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the key stage 1 national assessments was broadly in line with other schools nationally. Nevertheless, further work is necessary in order to

ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to work at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end Year 2.

Leaders and teachers ensure that reading has a high profile across the school. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, read fluently and with expression. They enjoy reading and have a range of favourite authors. The new reading room, staffed by the school's 'Reading Heroes', is well used and contributes effectively to promoting pupils' enjoyment in reading.

Behaviour across the school, in and outside lessons, is good. Pupils are welcoming, well-mannered and polite. Their positive attitudes to learning make a good contribution to their progress in the classroom. British values are promoted well. As a result, pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The single central record of pre-employment checks meets requirements. Appropriate training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. This includes pupils who may be at risk of female genital mutilation or being drawn into radical or extremist activity. Consequently, there is a clear culture in the school where all staff understand their collective responsibility for safeguarding pupils' welfare. You work effectively with outside agencies to reduce any potential risk to pupils and to keep them safe. Pupils that I spoke to were unanimously confident that they are safe and well cared for at school. In addition, the vast majority of parents I spoke to during the inspection, as well as the 21 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, agreed that their children are safe and happy in school.

Inspection findings

- For my first line of enquiry, I considered the effect of leaders' work to ensure that the most able pupils at key stage 2 make the best possible progress. Leaders, including governors, have made this a priority in the school improvement plan. As a result, they have restructured leadership responsibilities so as to better monitor pupils' progress. The most able pupils now benefit from intensive specialised classes for part of the week and extra-curricular work designed to stretch their attainment. A local partnership enables them to work with teachers from a nearby secondary school.
- The progress I saw in lessons, along with a scrutiny of the most able pupils' work, confirmed that these initiatives are starting to have an impact. However, you are clear that more work is needed to ensure that teaching is routinely challenging enough for these pupils in every lesson.
- Leaders' work to improve pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 was also a focus for this inspection. The school's use of a thematic curriculum has been effective in strengthening challenge in lessons, especially in developing specialised vocabulary and numeracy. There is clear evidence in Years 1 and 2 that standards overall have improved and pupils are

attaining broadly in line with national standards. However, this being said, leaders have not been sharp enough in ensuring that more pupils achieve to a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.

- We agreed that I would also look at how improvements in pupils' writing at key stage 2 have been secured since the last inspection. This is now a strength of the school. Leaders have ensured that the teaching of writing provides pupils with frequent opportunities to apply their writing skills. Together with explicit objectives, teachers provide clear explanations and guidance which help pupils to write imaginatively, using well-chosen vocabulary and language features. The thematic curriculum at key stage 2 promotes extended writing and pupils demonstrate resilience in redrafting and editing their work. As a result, all groups of pupils made swift progress, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In 2016, the progress made by Year 6 pupils in writing was in the top 10% of all schools nationally.
- My final line of enquiry was to look at whether you were doing enough to ensure that children in the early years reached a good level of development and are therefore well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Your assessment information shows that many children enter school with skills and understanding that are below those typically expected for their age. The early years leader has an accurate view of what the children need to learn to achieve a good level of development, and this has rightly been identified as a top priority for the school. Leaders have put astute planning in place to ensure that they make good gains in their learning. All groups of children have regular opportunities to practise and improve their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Records of children's achievement in the Reception classes provide evidence of strong progress. This is particularly seen in the way children are able to use phonics and form letters to record their ideas and knowledge accurately. Consequently, while the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development is still below the national norm, it has improved consistently over three years. The school's assessment data suggests it will improve further this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in key stage 1, teaching routinely challenges pupils, particularly those who are the most able, so that an increased number of pupils are working at a greater depth
- they are sharper in evaluating all aspects of the school's work that needs strengthening.

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

Yours sincerely

Jacques Szemalikowski
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I spoke with the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I met with you and your leadership team, middle leaders, parents and pupils. I heard a group of Year 2 and Year 5 pupils read. I observed Reception classes as well as lessons in Years 1 to 5 and looked at pupils' work in their books. I scrutinised Ofsted's online survey for parents (21 responses). There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys. I examined the school's website and safeguarding and child protection records. I reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also looked at the school's self-evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities and assessment information.