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Mrs Carolyn Fox  
Executive Headteacher  
Rise Park Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Fox

### **Short inspection of Rise Park Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in July 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. The school formed a multi-academy trust in 2014 and became the sponsor school for Rise Park Junior School.

You provide inspirational leadership. The staff, pupils and local community trust you and have faith in your abilities to raise standards in the school. As one parent put it, 'This is a great school. Our children love it and so do we. The head is brilliant!'

You and the recently appointed deputy headteacher have skills which complement each other and provide strong and firm but fair senior leadership. You both have high expectations of what pupils and staff can achieve. You are supported well by other leaders in the school. Your positive relationship with the local authority serves you well in evaluating the school's overall effectiveness.

You and governors share an aspirational vision for the future of the school as part of the academy trust. Parents and carers recognise this. You, your staff and pupils have created a friendly, welcoming community. Even the youngest children in the school are happy and confident to welcome visitors. They talk with pride about their learning. The climate and culture for learning in the school are strong because they are underpinned by caring, trusting relationships between staff and pupils.

Since the school became an academy, school leaders have worked hard to maintain

a good standard of education in the infant school while supporting the other school in the trust. This has stretched the leadership team's capacity considerably. Even so, you have rightly identified the priorities you still need to work on in the infant school in order to improve teaching, learning and assessment further.

Teachers' work has focused on improving the teaching of reading and this has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils have a good range of interesting books to read. Adults are skilled at helping pupils to apply their phonics knowledge in order to 'sound out' unknown words and, as their skills develop, to understand what they have read. However, teachers are not as effective at prompting and supporting pupils to use their growing knowledge of phonics to help them when they are writing. They sometimes move too quickly to teaching more complex spelling conventions before pupils are secure in all their basic knowledge of sounds and letters. This limits the progress that pupils make.

You are also working to develop teachers' confidence and skills in teaching mathematics, where pupils' achievement is not as strong as in reading and writing. In particular, pupils are given limited opportunities to develop reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Leaders have clear plans in place to support teachers in redressing this imbalance.

You told me about the school's work to improve pupils' skills in thinking and talking about their learning. Leaders' actions to support teachers in promoting these skills have had a good impact on children's progress in some classes, particularly in the early years provision. Leaders are keen to share this good practice more widely in all classes.

### **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 work well with external agencies and challenge them to act swiftly when help for a vulnerable child is needed.

Staff and leaders are up to date with all aspects of safeguarding training. Referral processes are understood and followed by staff. Checks made to ensure that newly appointed staff are safe to work with children are thorough. Governors monitor the single central record of these checks on a regular basis.

Parents are confident that their children are kept safe at school and that teachers 'really care'. This view was supported by the evidence available to inspectors as they walked around the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- A focus for the inspection was the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below that of other pupils in the school and pupils nationally.
- Leaders have analysed assessment information and identified that there are still differences between the rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils and others, but that these are diminishing. During the inspection, I looked at a large sample of pupils' books. I agree that outcomes are improving, but there is further work to do to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In common with other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics is sometimes limited by a lack of regular opportunities to engage in problem-solving and reasoning tasks.
- A further focus for the inspection was how effectively governors hold the school to account for the spending of the pupil premium funding to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governance has been restructured since the school became part of the academy trust. Governors and directors work well together to benefit the school community. One governor has specific responsibility for checking the impact of the pupil premium funding, which is measured with rigour. As a result, governors are able to challenge the work of the school effectively. They are well informed because they have reviewed research on how pupil premium funding has been put to good use in other schools. This puts governors in a good position to discuss spending decisions with senior leaders.
- I looked at the impact of the school's actions to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities. Leaders have put a range of strategies in place to improve attendance. They have worked with the educational welfare officer to identify families who need support or advice. They have issued fines to those parents who insist on taking their children on holiday during term time. Despite this and other actions taken, attendance remains a priority for improvement. There are signs of improvement this year, but leaders and governors recognise that there is still much work to be done to improve attendance further.
- My final area of focus for the inspection was how effectively leaders track children's progress in the early years provision. Children start Reception with skills and knowledge which are broadly typical for their age. The early years leader implements the school's assessment system very effectively. She analyses data and quickly identifies any children at risk of falling behind in their learning. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was above the national average in 2016.
- Adults in the three Reception classes have a detailed knowledge of every child. This helps them to support children extremely well in all areas of learning. Children's books show that they make strong progress from their starting points.

- The learning environment in the early years reflects all areas of learning well. Classrooms are stimulating places where children have fun, feel valued and as a result make good progress. This is because of the highly skilled way in which adults stretch children's thinking and celebrate their success.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' skills and confidence in teaching mathematics are strengthened so that pupils make consistently good progress, particularly with problem-solving and reasoning skills
- teachers support pupils to apply their phonics skills in writing
- further rigorous action is taken to improve attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

#### **Information about the inspection**

I had discussions with senior leaders and middle leaders about their school improvement work and safeguarding arrangements. I met with representatives of the governing board and with a director of the trust. I visited classes with the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher. I talked with children and with parents. I scrutinised a range of documents relating to the school's self-evaluation and to safeguarding. I reviewed the minutes of the governing board meetings. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I reviewed a large sample of pupils' books.