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13 July 2017

Mr Jim O'Shea
Headteacher
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Dear Mr O'Shea

Short inspection of Rushmore Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 December 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

You have a clear vision for improvement and high expectations of staff and pupils. Staff and governors share your aspirations and commitment to provide the best education for pupils. Parents are very supportive of what the school does for their children. They particularly appreciate the caring ethos that you have created, allowing their children to thrive. The school is a calm and nurturing environment, where staff help pupils to develop well, both academically and personally. This supports pupils' confidence and promotes strong attitudes to learning.

You have addressed the issues identified at the last inspection. For example, the inspection found that there was work to do to improve pupils' handwriting. In response, you developed the curriculum effectively, immediately prioritising the teaching of writing from Reception upwards. You have ensured that teachers receive effective training in teaching independent writing so that pupils can write skilfully in a range of genres. Consequently, by the time they reach key stage 2, pupils write well, neatly and with purpose.

Leaders and teachers ensure that reading has a high profile across the school. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, read fluently and with expression. The new library is popular, and the daily 'Rushmore Reads' sessions are well planned and provide

effective challenge for pupils of different abilities, including the most able pupils.

However, as leaders are aware, not all groups of pupils make the same consistently good progress across subjects, and middle leaders vary in their sharpness of their analysis of pupils' progress.

Pupils generally behave well across the school, in lessons and in the playground. They demonstrate positive attitudes, are welcoming, enthusiastic and polite. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly encouraged, not least by the 'Rushmore Resolutions' that underpin the ethos of the school. British values are promoted well, ensuring that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

I must emphasise how impressed I was with the quality of the school environment. It provides a wonderful, stimulating space for the pupils to learn in and is appreciated by all of the school community. Creative work on display around the school is of high quality.

Governors are enthused by your leadership of the school. They are clear about the strengths and areas for development, and support and challenge you and your leadership team well. They are informed about the school's work through a range of external reviews as well as your comprehensive reports.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors give pupils' safety an appropriately high priority. You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All checks and procedures for recruiting staff safely are carried out and recorded diligently. All school staff receive timely and high-quality training to ensure that they are confident in applying the school's policies and guidance in relation to safeguarding issues.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They demonstrate an appropriate knowledge of different types of bullying including verbal, physical and cyber bullying. Parents typically describe the school as 'caring', 'safe' and as having 'great community spirit'.

Inspection findings

- For my first line of enquiry, we agreed that I would consider pupils' achievement at key stage 2. In 2016, pupils' progress was in the in the top 10% of all schools nationally. However, pupils with lower starting points did not make the same rapid progress as their peers. Leaders recognise this point. They have taken effective action to accelerate the progress of these pupils.
- Teachers now have a clearer understanding of what is needed to raise standards further for all pupils in English and mathematics. This includes strategies to better challenge pupils' reading in English and more effectively question in mathematics.

- Consequently, the progress I saw in lessons, my scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's tracking system confirmed that pupils with lower starting points now make even stronger progress. Pupils who read to me did so with confidence and expression and with good comprehension skills. Some effectively used decoding strategies to read unfamiliar and difficult words.
- We agreed that I would also look at the actions taken by the school to sustain a rising trend of improvement in the early years and whether this strength is maintained in key stage 1.
- Leaders and teachers in the early years routinely use assessment of children's progress to hone their teaching approaches. As a precursor to developing strong literacy and numeracy, the school has prioritised children's social and emotional development. As a result, children demonstrate confidence and positive attitudes to learning, enabling rapid progress.
- As pupils move from the early years into key stage 1, progress is more variable due to differences in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum. The school rightly wants to make this transition seamless and has put a plan in place to ensure more consistency in teaching as children move into key stage 1.
- My final line of enquiry was to evaluate how effectively the school is tackling historically poorer attendance rates for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have an education, health and care plan. I also focused on the progress of these pupils at key stage 2.
- Leaders and staff have used a range of effective strategies to improve attendance. A newly appointed administrator has helped to identify what the barriers are to regular attendance for individual pupils and what is needed to provide families with well-focused and individual support. The local authority educational welfare officer is also involved in following up persistent absences. As a result, the proportion of pupils whose absence rates are too high is decreasing. You are, however, vigilant in recognising that there is still more to be done to improve the attendance of this group in line with their peers.
- Leaders' plans have prioritised improving the progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have an education, health and care plan. Evidence shows that the achievement of these pupils is now starting to improve. However, I found that some middle leaders are insufficiently sharp in evaluating pupils' progress and using information about pupils to support teaching.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle leaders are consistently effective in using available information to promote pupils' good or better progress
- teaching enables all groups of pupils to make consistently rapid progress from their starting points.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hackney. 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 two other governors. I met with you and your leadership team, middle leaders, parents and pupils. I heard groups of Year 2 and Year 5 pupils read. I observed Nursery and 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 (51 responses) and associated commentary (50 comments). I considered responses to both the pupil survey (43 responses) and the staff survey (18 responses). 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 leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, their improvement priorities and assessment information.