

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Martin Scarborough
Headteacher
Tufnell Park Primary School
Dalmeny Road
London
N7 0HJ

Dear Mr Scarborough

Short inspection of Tufnell Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 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. Since your appointment as headteacher in September 2014, you have worked well with the governing body to implement changes. You have listened to their advice and to the challenge they provide. Together with governors, you have restructured the school leadership to create new 'phase leader' roles. This is to strengthen the drive to improve teaching and learning, and ensure that pupils achieve well. This has been successful. Achievement is good with pupils making very good progress in reading and writing. In leading these changes, you have maintained a strong community spirit and good communications with parents. The school is a happy community with adults working well together as a team and ensuring that pupils succeed. Parents are supportive of the changes that have taken place. As one parent said, 'There is a great balance between kindness, creativity and an academic focus. We couldn't be happier.' Another parent talked of pupils having a great 'sense of belonging where children's curiosity for the world is encouraged and nurtured'. Parents, staff and governors have confidence in both you and in the school.

The leadership team and governors have made progress on the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection. Results in mathematics have improved and pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve their work. Leaders and governors have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and what needs to improve further. Governors actively keep parents informed. They take regular soundings to understand what parents think about the school and what concerns they have. Governors have maintained good lines of communication with

parents on the major building development that is due to begin shortly and to allay any worries or concerns. Leaders are fulfilling their roles well. They work together as a team to maintain the current strengths but also to tackle those priorities that you all know need further work. Suitable plans are in place to continue to improve with good and well-focused support sought from the local authority.

Leaders and governors know that the context of the school is changing rapidly as the school expands and moves into its new building. In addition, there is greater diversity as the proportion of disadvantaged pupils declines. Leaders are tightening their focus to respond to these changes. They support their teams well and ensure that lessons are consistently well planned and stimulating. Leaders are working successfully to improve the level of challenge across subjects and to make sure that teachers give all pupils the support they need to do well.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are working well with a thorough process for vetting new staff and volunteers working at the school. Governors regularly check the school's safeguarding records and undertake safeguarding audits around the school. These are incisive and used by school leaders to tighten processes further and to improve record keeping. All staff have had appropriate and recent training. A comprehensive school policy is supported by regular updates for staff. This ensures that staff follow the school's procedures and that they remain vigilant at all times. You refer concerns to external agencies as swiftly as appropriate and maintain good lines of communication with all agencies involved.

Pupils understand the need for caution and safety when using computers. They have a good understanding of which websites they can and cannot use. Pupils also have a good knowledge of how to protect themselves and what to do if they see cyber bullying taking place. They consider the school to be a safe place where adults look after them well. Pupils are confident that adults respond quickly if pupils have concerns about the way someone is behaving. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils play safely in the playground. All this contributes to the confidence among pupils that they are safe and looked after well. They have good relationships with their teachers and feel able to confide in them if they have a problem.

Inspection findings

- My first focus for the inspection was to review how leaders are ensuring that disadvantaged, middle-attaining pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. National assessments for 11-year-olds in 2016 indicated that this group of pupils made better progress in reading and writing than they did in mathematics.
- Phase leaders work with their teams to support and ensure greater consistency in the way teachers challenge pupils in their mathematics. Together, they ensure that pupils needing additional help to boost their progress are identified early and get the support they need. In some teams, teachers have grouped pupils in mathematics so that the most able pupils get extra support and challenge and

middle-attaining pupils have more focused support. This is working well. Pupils of all abilities are provided with that 'extra challenge' to encourage them to solve problems and apply the mathematical knowledge they have learned. With more precise teaching and support, some middle-attaining pupils are capable of taking on greater challenge and applying their knowledge to more complex mathematical problems.

- Another focus was to understand how leaders ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum supports high achievement and good progress across all subjects. Leaders have identified this as a priority for action. Information published on the school's website shows comprehensive planning for progression of skills and understanding in English and mathematics. It provides less information on how the curriculum ensures similar progress and high achievement in some other subjects.
- Curriculum provision for English and mathematics is strong. With good teaching and well-organised intervention for low attainers, achievement in English and mathematics has been successful with many pupils making significant progress. Humanities are taught well through a series of carefully chosen topic themes to provide a balance between history and geography and to build on prior learning. Themes encourage the school's 'outdoor classroom' and visits into the community to capture pupils' interest in the topics studied. Pupils value these experiences and talk enthusiastically about what they have done and what they have learned. All pupils have well-planned and regular lessons in information technology, music and physical education to ensure that they develop their skills and understanding. Spanish is taught regularly and even younger pupils are beginning to learn basics in the language. Pupils recognise that they do not experience design and technology as regularly as other subjects and that the curriculum narrows at times as they prepare for national assessments in English and mathematics. Phase leaders have begun to strengthen topic planning to ensure progress in the skills pupils are to learn in geography and history. They recognise that more needs to be done to expand on this work and have appropriate plans in place to do so.
- An additional focus was to see how well governors and leaders are implementing their plans to raise achievement in the early years. In 2016, pupils' achievement at the end of the early years had fallen from that achieved in previous years. Governors and leaders recognised early years as a priority and put plans in place to reverse this decline.
- Governors and leaders have followed through their action plan for improving the early years. They have involved the local authority to guide and strengthen leadership across the early years. They acknowledge that more work needs to be done. Audits of the early years learning environment have taken place. In addition, there are regular reviews of progress in the early years as part of the governors' scrutiny of the school's improvement plan. Governors take a keen interest in reviewing assessment. They are aware that early indications show improved achievement at the end of the early years compared with last year's assessment results. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils starting in the early years is reducing year on year, with a significant number of pupils joining the school in the Reception Year rather than attending the nursery. Leaders have not

routinely analysed differences in the achievement of those who have been through the Nursery Year and those who have only entered the school at the beginning of the Reception Year. Governors and leaders recognise they need to look more closely at the progress pupils make from their individual starting points. They also recognise that they should not rely too heavily on information from assessments at the end of the early years.

- A final focus of the inspection was to review how leaders are improving attendance and reducing persistent absence among those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance was not significantly different from the national average but persistent absence among pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was high in 2016.
- Overall, attendance is improving step by step. For pupils other than those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, attendance is in line with the national average. Some pupils have complex needs and struggle to attend school regularly. Leaders are working well with the home-school liaison officer to maintain good contact and to act swiftly when the pupils do not arrive in school. You involve external agencies well to provide support to the families concerned. Good lines of communication are maintained with these agencies to make sure that they are 'on the case'. There are good examples of swift action being taken when pupils do not arrive at school. This led to the pupils arriving into school a little later, therefore avoiding missing a full day of school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- provision in the early years and progress made by pupils is kept under close review to make sure that all pupils make good progress from their respective starting points
- all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes high achievement in all subjects and extends pupils' subject knowledge and skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Wagstaff
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I had discussions with the headteacher and governors about the actions they had put in place to improve the school and to ensure that pupils were safe. Phase leaders were interviewed about their role in supporting teachers to bring about improved learning for all pupils. I spoke with the leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities about the efforts being taken to reduce absence among this group of pupils. 'Learning walks' took place with the headteacher across Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. 'Learning walks' also took place across the early years along with reviews of assessment information and pupils' learning profiles. I spoke with a group of pupils from Years 4 to 6 and looked at their work. I analysed a range of school documents linked to the school self-evaluation and improvement priorities. I met with a representative from the local authority. The 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were reviewed, as were the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.