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Mrs Jenna Clark
Executive headteacher
Gainsborough Primary School
Berkshire Road
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Dear Mrs Clark

Short inspection of Gainsborough 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 February 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 created an ambitious culture within the school so that pupils make consistently good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. You are determined to ensure that pupils are provided with a stimulating curriculum which enables them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in a range of subjects in which they make good progress. However, this is not yet consistent across all subjects.

At the last inspection you were asked to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, especially in English. You have worked tirelessly to ensure that the teaching of English and mathematics has improved across all year groups. You have invested a great deal of resources into developing teaching. Leaders and teachers are very positive about the school's partnership with the Primary Advantage Federation, which has enabled them to develop strong subject knowledge. Your performance management of teachers is rigorous, and teachers value the support and encouragement they are given to improve their practice. Your own records indicate that teaching is more effective since the previous inspection.

You were also asked to raise achievement in writing, particularly for those capable of reaching high standards. The effective leadership of writing has ensured that significant numbers of pupils achieve national age-related standards in writing in all year groups. Leaders have ensured that the most able pupils have opportunities to deepen their writing skills in English, as well as a range of other subjects.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders are relentless in the actions they take to ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Your safeguarding procedures are rigorous, and records are detailed and of high quality. Staff and governors receive regular training and are reminded constantly about their duties to safeguard pupils. They understand the importance of reporting any concerns quickly so pupils receive suitable help and guidance to keep them safe. Leaders build good links with parents and carers as well as external agencies to inform their decisions about how best to support vulnerable pupils.

Pupils are taught how to be safe in a variety of situations, including when they are using computers. Pupils say that they feel safe in their school and understand the importance of making sensible choices to help them stay safe when they are not in school.

The commitment of your team to promoting pupils' personal development and well-being is strong. This has played an important role in improving overall attendance and punctuality for most pupils. However, pupils from a disadvantaged background still have higher levels of absence than their peers.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we looked at the quality of leadership, and in particular leaders' capacity to drive further improvements. Leadership has been strengthened considerably in the school. You and your newly appointed deputy headteacher work as a cohesive team. Together, you have led significant changes in the school, which are having a positive impact on improving teaching and raising standards.
- The school's work with the Primary Advantage Federation, which includes an outstanding school, has enabled middle leaders to develop their skills and confidence in the subjects they lead. Leaders work well together across the school and the federation to disseminate and learn from effective practice. They share ideas about assessment and the curriculum, which has resulted in consistently good teaching.
- Since joining the Primary Advantage Federation in April 2017, the structure of governance has changed. Governors know the school well and work effectively with you and your senior team to provide both support and challenge. Your governors are well trained and are ambitious for the school. As a result, they are able to hold leaders more rigorously to account for the impact of their work to improve outcomes for pupils. For example, governors have focused on ways to improve attendance and this had led to an overall reduction in pupils' absence

rates. However, although improving, there is further work to do to ensure that disadvantaged pupils' attendance rises to be at least in line with other pupils nationally.

- We also agreed to look at the effectiveness of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was because historically these pupils have often made slower progress than their peers with similar starting points. In 2016, absence rates for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were also above the national average.
- I found that the leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. You and your team have successfully created an inclusive environment where leaders and staff fully understand and plan for the needs of pupils. Teachers and additional adults work well together to plan and adapt teaching so pupils complete tasks that help them learn well. This is particularly effective in key stage 1, where pupils make rapid progress in the development of their phonics skills and knowledge. As a result, they read a range of texts confidently. Your current assessment information shows that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making at least good progress and now have good attendance.
- Another area we focused on was the progress of the most able pupils in reading. Historically, in all key stages, the progress made by the most able pupils in their reading was not as strong as in their writing.
- You and your team are taking effective action to address this. I found that a greater proportion of pupils are achieving the highest standards in reading than for other pupils nationally. This is as a result of the consistent approach to the teaching of reading across the school and the wide range of reading materials you provide for your pupils. The most able pupils typically enjoy reading activities and have access to challenging texts which they study in class. Nevertheless, I found that although some pupils have developed a passion for reading, this is not yet widespread across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a culture of reading for pleasure is developed across the school so that all pupils read widely outside of school and deepen their reading skills
- the attendance of pupils from a disadvantaged background is as good as their peers.

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

Yours sincerely

Helena Mills
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers and two governors. I spoke to a representative from the trust and a representative from the local authority. With members of your leadership team, I visited a range of lessons and had the opportunity to speak to pupils and to see their work. I met with a group of pupils during the day. There were four responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised a range of documentation, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.