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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mr Sean O'Flynn
Headteacher
Ashmead Primary School
Ashmead Road
Deptford
London
SE8 4DX

Dear Mr O'Flynn

Short inspection of Ashmead Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 July 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 October 2012.

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 established a strong team with the skills and knowledge to complement one another. This leadership team provides a balanced and considered approach to the management and strategic direction of the school.

A key characteristic is the supportive and inclusive ethos which permeates the work of the school and is strongly recognised by pupils, parents and staff alike. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and, as a result, pupils work hard, are willing to take risks in their learning and want to do well. Pupils are proud of their school and as one pupil said, 'I smile every the morning when I know I am coming to school. Every teacher here cares for every child.'

Inspectors in the last inspection report said the school should enhance the role of all leaders in raising pupils' achievement. As a result of careful development work, your leaders now share the same high expectations of staff and pupils and provide strong role models for their colleagues. They work constructively with teachers, checking pupils' learning and providing clear, consistent advice about what teachers can do to improve their practice.

Middle leaders and teachers are much more confident now in setting suitably challenging targets for pupils to enable them to work at greater depth. However, you recognise that the consistency of this approach needs strengthening throughout the school.

Parents value the strong relationships and commitment by all staff to promote the well-being of pupils. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and work hard to achieve their best. They are extremely polite and well mannered and conduct around the school is excellent.

Children get a strong start in the early years foundation stage, which ensures that they are set up well for starting school. Children talking about their learning is well established in lessons. They are able to explain about what they are learning as opposed to what they are doing. Pupils know from their targets how they are doing and how they need to improve. Monitoring and analysis of pupils' outcomes by group and year group are detailed and inform pupil progress meetings, where teachers are held to account for their pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of a high quality. This includes training for staff, as well as the required employment checks and vetting arrangements.

You and your staff are determined and diligent in keeping children safe. You ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding because you teach pupils effectively about various types of risk, harm and hazard.

You keep very thorough records of any poor behaviour or bullying incidents, although these are very few. You have an effective process for investigating reported bullying incidents

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to assess how you have addressed writing outcomes in key stage 2. There is clear evidence to indicate that improvements are being made in this area.
- A sustained and effective focus has been maintained on improving the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school. The work in pupils' books shows that they have made a great deal of progress since the start of the academic year. This is backed up by the school's data. School leaders anticipate improved outcomes in writing for the coming year for all year groups.
- My second line of enquiry focused on how effectively leaders are improving the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 1. In the past, boys have not achieved as well as girls. This is the same for disadvantaged pupils compared with others at this key stage. Leaders have made appropriate changes to the curriculum to ensure that work is more appealing to boys. As a result, a large number of pupils, including boys, are making rapid progress.
- You also instigated a detailed evaluation of the 2016 key stage 1 writing, reading and mathematics outcomes, and, as a result, introduced procedures to enable more pupils to make effective progress. Pupils' writing books confirm that they are becoming increasingly skilled at editing and improving their work. However, there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to do problem-solving and

reasoning in mathematics, as identified from work analysis of key stage 1 maths books.

- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 did not perform as well as other pupils in the school. You have analysed the reasons for this and were able to articulate these clearly. The school's assessment information for pupils currently in school shows that the vast majority of pupils are making at least good progress towards achieving their expected outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all disadvantaged pupils are making at least good progress.
- My third key line of enquiry focused on how effectively you have been improving pupils' attendance and reducing persistent absence, in particular for disadvantaged pupils as well as for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You and your governors have introduced a range of effective strategies and actions to ensure that parents and carers are challenged about absence.
- You check attendance and involve other professional agencies, as required, to ensure that pupils attend school. Furthermore, improvements to the curriculum and teaching mean that pupils are highly motivated and want to come to school. Attendance is now in line with the national average and is rapidly improving for both disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- You have taken steps to gather parental views and have set up 'parent cafes' to strengthen engagement with parents and to involve them in decision-making. In addition, you have put in place numerous strategies to encourage parents to engage with school, for example newsletters and the use of social media.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is positive. Pupils are polite and welcoming. They told me that everyone gets on well together. Pupils say that bullying 'doesn't happen very often', and they are confident that it is quickly and effectively dealt with when it does happen. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and recognise that it is everyone's responsibility to behave well and treat each other with respect.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they provide more opportunities for pupils in key stage 1 to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Danvir Visvanathan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities:

- a scrutiny of the single central record of recruitment checks and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, including the school's safeguarding policy and other policies relating to behaviour and attendance
- meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and four governors and a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority
- a review of the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans
- observations of learning across the school and analysis of pupils' writing and mathematics books
- observations of pupils in a range of situations, including at break and lunchtime
- conversations with a group of pupils and with pupils in lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall
- listening to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.

I took into account 57 parent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 18 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 27 responses to the staff survey.