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24 November 2017

Miss Bernie Garvey
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Garvey

Short inspection of Culvers House Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. School leaders have accurately identified the strengths of the school and have planned well to tackle priorities for school improvement. For example, in 2017, the actions of the senior leadership team led to improvements in key stage 2 pupils' progress in both reading and writing.

Parents, staff and pupils are positive about the school. You have high expectations of the pupils. They are courteous, well mannered, behave well in class and have good relationships with teachers and other adults. All adults at the school work to maintain a productive and supportive atmosphere for learning.

Governors demonstrate an understanding of the priorities for the school, such as raising the quality of writing and increasing pupils' rates of attendance. They are well informed about the work of the school through discussion with senior leaders at committee meetings and visits to the school. For example, governors recently held discussions with pupils about science teaching. Governors recognise the importance of robust systems to keep pupils safe, and regularly check that these are working effectively.

The previous inspection report identified areas for development that included pupils' lack of confidence in responding to questions, and provision for the more able pupils. The school has addressed these issues so that, as a result of improved teaching, pupils show greater confidence in explaining their answers; and there is a suitable level of challenge for the more able pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The necessary checks relating to the recruitment of staff are in place, with regular monitoring by senior leaders and governors. Staff understand and follow the systems and procedures in place for them to report safeguarding concerns. Regular training ensures that staff have up-to-date statutory guidance to help them fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The school's welfare and child protection teams have effective working relationships with external agencies.

Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare, and teachers deal with them quickly. The pupils say that the school is a friendly place, and those new to the school are made to feel welcome. They also say that the school is a safe place and they are able to talk to staff if they have concerns.

Inspection findings

- The 2017 provisional key stage 2 assessment information indicates that, while pupils' progress has improved, their attainment was not as high as should be expected. The school acknowledges that both progress and attainment need to be improved. We agreed that the first line of enquiry would be to explore the strategies that leaders are implementing to make this happen.
- Strategies to improve pupils' progress and attainment in writing include the introduction of a new spelling scheme, booster classes and targeted interventions. Work in pupils' books shows that writing is improving, and correct grammar and punctuation are more evident. Feedback from teachers is helping pupils to edit and further improve their work to increase the depth and fluency of their writing. However, as yet, pupils' progress in writing remains uneven, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school is also seeking to develop pupils' understanding and fluency in mathematics as well as their reasoning and problem-solving skills. During the inspection, teachers used modelling techniques to develop pupils' understanding. Effective questioning provided opportunities for pupils to gain, reinforce and develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils in key stage 2 were able to give clear and accurate explanations of how they solved problems. Pupils' books showed that they were developing their methods to achieve success when answering challenging questions.
- Leaders have identified the need to raise the achievement and progress of disadvantaged pupils, especially in key stage 1. We agreed that the second line of enquiry should focus on how leaders are supporting disadvantaged pupils in this key stage.
- Senior leaders have a clear strategy for supporting disadvantaged pupils. Interventions are in place and evidence in lessons shows that they are starting to achieve results. There is a collective recognition among school leaders of the importance of monitoring to ensure that interventions continue to be effective.
- Teachers use their detailed understanding of their classes to target support for particular pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. During our visits to key stage 1 lessons we saw the support for pupils to improve their knowledge of phonics and their reading skills. Pupils confidently used the strategies that teachers modelled. In

mathematics, pupils' books contained examples of success in solving problems following teachers' interventions. Adults keep comprehensive records of the interventions and outcomes, and leaders ensure that these are regularly monitored. As a result of the school's actions, disadvantaged pupils are now achieving broadly as well as other pupils in writing and mathematics in key stage 1.

- You had recognised that actions were needed to improve pupils' attendance, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils. We agreed that the third line of enquiry would be to explore the impact of these actions.
- Monitoring and tracking systems are efficient and any absences are followed up with telephone calls and letters to parents and carers. A recently appointed family support worker has given the school extra capacity, and detailed files highlight the actions undertaken with a number of families. These include meetings with families of those children who are persistently absent.
- Good attendance is promoted and rewarded in weekly assemblies with certificates and prizes. Data for the current school year indicates that attendance is improving across the school, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the strategies that have proven success in key stage 1 are used consistently through the school to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their peers, particularly in writing
- attendance continues to improve until it is at least in line with that of schools nationally, and particularly for pupils who are persistently absent

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Simber
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held discussions with you and senior leaders about your plans for improvement and your evaluation of the schools' effectiveness. I met with middle leaders to discuss their work. We jointly visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning, and to speak to pupils. I reviewed pupils' work in their books. I met with governors and the school improvement partner. We met with the school family support worker to discuss the actions being taken to improve attendance. I scrutinised the schools' safeguarding procedures. I considered the views of parents and staff.