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Mrs Caroline Logan
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Logan

Short inspection of Park Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 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, staff and governors have created an environment in which pupils feel valued. Parents are very supportive, with almost all of the parents who took part in the online survey and those that I spoke to paying tribute to the efforts of staff and leaders. This is because they believe that their children are happy and taught well. A group of parents who spoke with me at the start of the day commented that, 'This school is brilliant with parents and children', and, 'The headteacher and the teachers are really efficient in dealing with any issues.' You and the governors share the same high level of commitment and drive required in order to bring about continued improvement. This is reflected in the confidence that staff and parents have in the school's leadership.

It is clear that the pupils come first and are central to the school's work. You have created an inclusive community where every small step to success is celebrated. Staff are encouraged and trusted to be innovative in their teaching. You, together with staff and governors, share a passion for promoting pupils' aspirations of what they can achieve.

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards learning. During lessons they work hard and support one another when working collaboratively. Their manners are impeccable; pupils show courtesy at all times and move sensibly around the

school. Pupils are happy and say, rightly, that behaviour is good. This is reflected in the record of incidents of unacceptable behaviour and the results of the online pupil questionnaire. Pupils feel that should someone misbehave, it is dealt with swiftly and the necessary action is taken to stop it happening again.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There has been a whole-school drive to raise standards in handwriting and, as a result, pupils take great pride in their books and their work. Both the 'Handwriting Promise' and the challenge of gaining their 'Pen Licence' motivate them to do well.

You have made sure that teachers give pupils accurate and challenging feedback that helps to move learning forward. This happens consistently across the school in all subjects and in all year groups. Pupils respond well to this feedback and understand its importance in developing their learning. 'They never say negative, they'll always say positive stuff,' I was told by a pupil during a discussion. Pupils talk knowledgeably about their next steps and what they need to focus on in order to improve.

You have worked with staff and other stakeholders to create the school development plan. Leaders have used their accurate self-evaluations of teaching and learning to identify the right priorities in their plans for further improvement. You review the development plan regularly and fine tune further actions. You ensure that governors know what actions the school has taken and the impact these actions have had. You and other leaders use assessment information and other data to inform the decision-making process and introduce precise strategies to further enhance the learning of all pupils. You recognise that there is still further improvement work required to ensure that pupils of middle ability make even stronger progress. You are also focusing on diminishing differences further in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, especially in phonics in Year 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a strength across the school. You have made sure that all policies and procedures are fit for purpose. Staff have received appropriate training in how they can protect and support pupils. They know that safeguarding of pupils is everyone's responsibility. You have further strengthened safeguarding by building relationships with outside agencies to provide deeper layers of support to ensure that all pupils are safe.

Your involvement of parents in initiatives such as the Parent Forum has given them confidence and a sense of security for the well-being of their children. Parents feel well informed and understand school policies on areas such as attendance and behaviour. Your determination to account for pupils when they are absent is acknowledged by parents and strengthens their trust in you to care for their children.

Inspection findings

- The improvements that leaders have put in place in early intervention for disadvantaged pupils are having a positive impact on their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This is evident through pupils' work and in the school's assessment information. Leaders have also developed robust action plans to cater for those disadvantaged pupils in need of additional support.
- Teachers intervene swiftly to support disadvantaged pupils and help them to catch up. In order to speed up progress further, leaders have introduced additional activities and booster classes. This has had a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. However, you rightly recognise that the challenge could be higher for some disadvantaged pupils to enable them to make even more progress.
- Leaders are determined to ensure that a greater proportion of middle-ability pupils achieve the higher standard in reading and mathematics. Leaders have been rigorous in their efforts to identify barriers to progress. Pupils who need additional support in order to attain the higher standard in reading and mathematics are monitored closely. This helps to ensure that staff plan timely interventions to extend the progress of this group of pupils. While these actions are having a positive impact on the outcomes for these pupils, you rightly recognise that some can still make even stronger progress.
- Teachers use high-quality questioning effectively to require pupils to think deeply about their work. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and an emphasis on challenge within lessons is helping middle-ability pupils to make stronger progress. Pupils accurately assess their own work and identify what needs to be improved against the criteria that teachers set. Pupils chat quietly and purposefully about work, share ideas and discuss what they have learned.
- The school successfully identifies disadvantaged pupils who show early signs of having difficulty learning phonics. Leaders have developed a range of strategies to support these pupils. The school's current assessment information shows that these approaches are having a positive impact on the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1. However, the percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 still does not yet match that of other pupils nationally. The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils have achieved the expected standard by the end of key stage 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the rate of progress of middle-ability pupils is further accelerated in reading and mathematics so that more pupils achieve the higher standards
- the strategies and approaches to support disadvantaged pupils in using and applying their phonic knowledge are further embedded so that a greater proportion achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the

end of Year 1

- the level of challenge for disadvantaged pupils is increased to enable them all to make even stronger progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Ellis
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your middle leaders, other members of staff and governors. You and I conducted lesson observations to observe the quality of teaching and learning. During this time, we took the opportunity to look at pupils' books together. I also spoke with a number of pupils about their learning and their experiences of being a pupil at Park Hill. I looked at displays around the school and saw further examples of pupils' work. I scrutinised the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks to make sure that it complies with the government's requirements. I held discussions with you as the designated safeguarding lead, looked at behaviour logs and reviewed attendance information. I spoke with staff and looked at the staff questionnaire results. I reviewed the 44 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day. I reviewed the online pupil questionnaire and the online staff questionnaire.