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Mrs Christine Haslam
Headteacher
Orchard Primary School
Orchard Road
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Dear Mrs Haslam

Short inspection of Orchard Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018 with Grace Marriott, Ofsted Inspector, 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

You lead an effective team which has a single, unified view of the strengths of the school and those aspects which need further improvement. You changed the leadership structure to ensure that meticulous and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning takes place. Year leaders and subject leaders work effectively together to promote consistently good provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility. The school leadership team is prompt at identifying any underperformance. The resulting actions are communicated to staff clearly and accurately and carried out consistently well across the school, with a positive impact on improving pupils' progress across subjects.

At the time of your previous inspection, the many strengths of the school were recognised. These included pupils' positive attitudes to learning, which continue to be a strength. The inspectors identified a need to make sure that more-able pupils are given more difficult work to do, especially in writing. You have effectively addressed this by developing teachers' expertise in the teaching of writing. Pupils' work in books shows that they write for a range of purposes and in different genres. This has enabled pupils, including the most able pupils, to reach and sometimes exceed the expected standards.

You have identified the correct priorities for the next stage of development and are beginning to take the right steps to make improvements. Your priorities include strengthening the teaching of reading and improving pupils' attendance.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The school is meeting the statutory requirements and there is a clear culture of safety. Staff are trained to identify possible warning signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and they know what to do if they have any concerns. Safeguarding referrals are carefully documented and any issues recorded. The school site is secure and well cared for. Governors receive regular updates on safeguarding issues and effectively hold school leaders to account.

Pupils said that they feel safe in school because adults take care of them. They are able to talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe online. They know what to do should any bullying arise.

Inspection findings

- In our initial discussions, we identified reading as one of our key lines of enquiry. This was because, in 2017, the number of pupils in Year 6 who achieved the expected standard was below the national average. This was also true for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have analysed the reasons for the relative weakness in reading compared with writing. They have put in place a range of strategies to help both teachers and pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils' knowledge of phonics is strong by the time they leave key stage 1. Leaders have also increased the amount of time devoted to reading. The emphasis has now shifted to the development of pupils' fluency in reading and comprehension skills as well as the more sophisticated skills of inference and deduction. Pupils talk very positively and knowledgeably about books. Teachers encourage pupils to use their reading skills in other lessons. The impact of the school's action is evident in pupils' increasing enjoyment of reading.
- Teachers and leaders track pupils' progress in reading carefully and take swift action if any are at risk of falling behind. Individual or small-group sessions are time-limited, and are carefully checked to ensure that they are having the expected impact. Pupils completing these sessions are generally making good progress. Current assessment information shows that attainment and progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are both improving rapidly. School leaders now need to ensure that these actions are embedded to increase the proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieving the expected standards in reading by the end of key stage 2.
- We also identified mathematics as a key line of enquiry, particularly the achievement of most able pupils. Following the below-average results in mathematics in key stage 2 in 2017, school leaders have reviewed the approach to the teaching of this subject. They have identified the need to develop pupils' reasoning skills. They have also put emphasis on ensuring that pupils are fluent in number and calculation. This is evident in lessons and in pupils' work in books. Pupils engage actively in mathematical discussions. They are consistently encouraged to think about mathematics more deeply, developing their problem-

solving and reasoning skills further.

- Teachers' effective questioning probes pupils' understanding well. They also provide pupils with useful and timely guidance to correct mathematical misconceptions. Pupils act on this promptly, enabling them to demonstrate progress in their learning. They enjoy working on challenging mathematics activities. They are given opportunities to think independently and choose strategies to solve mathematical problems. As a result, most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, exceed expected standards in mathematics.
- We also looked at the progress of disadvantaged pupils in phonics during this inspection. Overall, pupils' achievement in phonics has been above the national average by the end of Year 1 since 2016. This is because of the school's effective teaching of phonics and early reading throughout the school. However, in 2016 and 2017, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as other pupils nationally in the phonics screening check. Leaders and governors responded to this by using the pupil premium funding for an additional teacher to support the teaching of phonics.
- When hearing them read, it was evident that disadvantaged pupils' skills in phonics are improving. These pupils show that they are using their phonics knowledge to work out unfamiliar words when reading. This is supported by current assessment information, which shows that they are making good progress in their phonics knowledge.
- Finally, we focused on pupils' attendance. The high rates of persistent absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and of disadvantaged pupils have been key issues for the school for the past three years. There is a team of staff who monitor and track attendance and absence on a daily basis. Attendance records are thorough and maintained to a high standard.
- The school is sensitive to the needs of its pupils and equally robust in challenging non-attendance. There are many instances where targeted support has improved attendance rates for individual pupils. However, school leaders recognise that there is more work to do before persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils reaches the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the actions being taken by the school to improve reading are consolidated so that a higher proportion of pupils achieve the expected standards at the end of key stage 2
- further consideration is given to strategies to boost the attendance of disadvantaged pupils so that it matches or exceeds the national average.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the

director of children's services for Hounslow. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Edison David
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, we discussed the work of the school with you, the two deputy headteachers and with middle leaders. We also considered responses to Parent View and the staff survey. We met with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and also their views on learning and behaviour in general. We held discussions with the local authority's representative. We met with two governors who were able to provide us with additional information. We also considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website. We looked at recruitment files, the single central record, and the analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with school leaders, we visited classes to observe learning and we looked at samples of pupils' work in reading, writing, and mathematics. We listened to reading by pupils from across the ability range.