

15 February 2018

Mrs Michelle Thomas
Executive Headteacher
Shacklewell Primary School
Shacklewell Row
Hackney
London
E8 2EA

Dear Mrs Thomas

Short inspection of Shacklewell Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2018, 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 March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during the short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have a clear vision for the school and are supported by highly skilled teaching staff at every level, and knowledgeable governors. Consequently, from the day they start at Shacklewell, all pupils make excellent progress in their learning. Pupils talk positively about all aspects of the school's provision; the exciting curriculum and the many enrichment opportunities on offer. A strong sense of inclusion permeates the school with a commitment that every pupil achieves the very best possible outcomes. Inspiring and motivating quotes, displays, and 'maker spaces' in classrooms, all encourage pupils to challenge their thinking further and to investigate. Pupils confidently share their 'yes we can!', have-a-go attitude, persevering and enjoying all the school has to offer.

You have successfully addressed the areas identified during the last inspection. Standards have been raised further and align more closely to national expectations. You are a recognised national leader of education. You, well supported by leaders within the federation, have been instrumental in ensuring that opportunities are available to support and develop all staff to form a united team. This united team share your ambition for high-quality education. Inspection evidence confirmed that

staff demonstrate extremely high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Children in the early years now have regular opportunities to develop greater independence. Even the youngest nursery children were seen confidently choosing resources, independent of adult help. They collaborate well with each other. From below-average starting points on entry to your school, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen since the last inspection and is well above national averages. These strong gains in children's learning continue throughout the school. Progress measures at the end of key stage 2 are significantly better than national averages and outcomes are high.

However, while the proportions of pupils achieving the highest standards remain high, you have identified precisely areas that could be improved even further. For example, a higher proportion of key stage 1 disadvantaged pupils could achieve even more. You have gathered first-hand information to inform your judgements, and wisely involved other leaders and governors in producing a detailed pupil premium strategy. As a result, everyone is clear about what the latest research says about effective improvement. They know how the school can improve further, and the right actions to make these improvements.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They talk confidently about how to minimise risks when using modern technologies or travelling to school. Even the youngest pupils demonstrate confidence and an awareness of safe practices when using the exciting, outdoor equipment. You and your leadership team have continued to make sure that pupils are safe, and that all staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously.

Staff have engaged in a range of up-to-date training and know precisely what to do if they have any concerns about a child's well-being. Adults spoke informatively about their training and discussions on a range of safeguarding risks, including female genital mutilation, children missing in education, extremism and radicalisation. Staff have a very good understanding of the school's expectations of both adult and pupil behaviour. They recognise the importance in demonstrating good role models for pupils and in challenging behaviours that do not meet the school's expectations. As one parent reported, 'There is a real spirit of respect for all.'

A recent local authority audit of the school's safeguarding procedures, along with governors' own in-school checks and visits, have further enhanced school systems. The leadership team have continued to make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Governors have an accurate view of the school's performance and a realistic understanding of the diverse community that the school serves. They ask challenging questions, and remain aspirational for the school and the federation

as a whole. Governors are highly skilled, are very supportive, and work closely with you and your leadership team. Like you, they are fully committed to supporting ongoing training and development, and supporting in-school research for all staff to secure further improvement.

- Excellent partnerships are made with other schools in the federation and the teaching school's alliance. The school benefits from the many 'home-grown' staff who lead at all levels. All staff know their roles well. This includes recognised specialist leaders of education, subject leaders, teaching staff with expertise in developing children's motor skills or language fluency, and staff who are supporting those new to teaching. Senior and middle leaders have successfully created a culture of support that enables staff and pupils to flourish. For example, staff and pupils give presentations on their innovative use of information and communication technology at conferences, both locally and abroad. This helps share the work of the school but also helps staff and pupils learn from others. They gain from this and ideas from your teachers and pupils make a strong contribution to ongoing school improvements. Staff retention rates are high.
- The rich, vibrant and exciting curriculum is a strength of the school. I saw clear evidence of pupils using technology effectively across all areas of their learning, ably supported by highly skilled staff. This creative use of technology helps learning become memorable for pupils. For example, pupils' use of the virtual reality headsets to visit Machu Picchu contributed to their excitement in learning. Pupils of all ages talk eloquently on how technology is used to capture and celebrate the range of learning experiences taking place across the school. They value the many opportunities to write purposefully across the curriculum. Pupils choose the most appropriate internet applications and publish their independent writing, sharing their work with a wider audience. Consequently, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of why they are writing, how best to present their work, and who the writing is for. Pupils take genuine care producing some wonderful work across subjects using a range of media, including technology.
- Sampling of a range of work across the school and subject areas suggests that staff are highly accurate in their assessment of what each pupil can do. The systematic teaching of phonics and direct teaching of reading is supporting all pupils very well. This is particularly the case for those at the early stages of learning English and also the most able. Learning activities are pitched correctly, tailored to pupils' individual needs. The books sampled showed evidence of adults regularly tracking individual pupil's achievements and recording the rapid gains made in their learning. In the classes visited, highly trained staff were seen developing pupils' language and literacy skills effectively across all areas of the curriculum. Teaching staff know when to intervene and when to step back. I saw clear evidence that teaching staff routinely challenge the most able pupils. They use effective questioning so that pupils are encouraged to explain their reasoning. In mathematics, pupils are able to challenge themselves further, asking questions to understand why their method worked. They explain how it worked rather than explaining what they did. While levels of challenge are high, you are well aware of the need to further reduce any attainment gaps that may exist. For example, between the most able disadvantaged and other able pupils,

by the end of Year 2.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of disadvantaged pupils improves further within key stage 1, so that a greater proportion achieve the highest standards by the end of Year 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your headteacher and three governors, including the chair. I spoke with a representative from the local authority by telephone and had a meeting with a group of middle leaders. I also met with staff responsible for overseeing the checks relating to staff recruitment and for keeping children safe from harm. I met with a group of pupils, considered the 96 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, and the 57 free-text responses. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and to look at their books. A number of documents were reviewed, including checks made to safeguard children, and records of pupil's progress and attainment. I scrutinised the school's plans for improvement, your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and documents relating to the work of the governing body. The 22 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire were also considered.