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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Melanie Dye
Headteacher
John Bramston Primary School
Newcastle Avenue
New North Road
Ilford
Essex
IG6 3EE

Dear Mrs Dye

Short inspection of John Bramston Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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.

You and the leadership team have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. These included ensuring that teachers plan lessons that consistently set work that matches the different abilities of pupils. There is now evidence of more opportunities for open-ended tasks in which pupils can develop independence in their learning, particularly in mathematics.

You have increased the membership of the leadership team, which has meant greater capacity to develop the team of teachers, including those new to the profession. This has meant that teachers have access to high-quality support with their planning of lessons to challenge pupils appropriately. The regular and robust monitoring cycle ensures that leaders quickly pick up any concerns and provide staff with strategies to improve classroom practice. The senior leaders work closely alongside their assigned phase, often team-teaching to model effective lessons for colleagues. As a result, teaching seen during the inspection was strong. You and your leadership team demonstrate a shared ambition for your pupils and their families. You accurately evaluate the school's current strengths and areas for improvement. The school's 'learning without limits' approach underpins the ethos of the school. This was evident in the challenges set for pupils in lessons and in the books seen during the inspection.

Governors know the school well and they have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement, using the accurate information from senior leaders. This means that they successfully hold the leadership team to account, particularly about the spending of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They know that the dip in outcomes in 2016 for Year 6 pupils meant that these pupils did not perform as well as they could have in writing and mathematics. As a result, the governors and school leaders swiftly put in place plans to address this. The current school assessment information shows that pupils are now making better progress. Governors agree that more work is required to develop teachers' understanding of mathematics mastery in order to increase the proportion of pupils working at the higher standards. They support leaders' initiatives to spend the designated funding to develop a secure pastoral support network for identified pupils. This approach demonstrates how the ethos of developing the 'whole child' is at the heart of the school's work.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records that ensure that staff are suitable to work with children are up to date and checked regularly by the member of staff leading on safeguarding and the link governor. Staff training ensures that staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of current safeguarding guidance and procedures. The school works effectively with the relevant services, and swift referrals ensure that families have the right support when required.

Pupils are very proud to attend John Bramston Primary School. They are clear that staff deal with any negative behaviour quickly. They have a great amount of respect for their teachers. One pupil said, 'Our teachers work hard and the learning they provide is fun.' Throughout the class visits, pupils demonstrated very positive behaviour for learning. Pupils listen attentively and respectfully to each other. They are eager to speak to visitors about their learning. They share resources appropriately. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson on shape, pupils used cutting tools safely and responsibly when dividing play-dough shapes. The pupil ambassadors spoken to during the inspection were clear that the school works hard to ensure that pupils know how to assess risks when using online technology.

Parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school. The majority of the responders to the Ofsted online questionnaire said that they felt their children are safe and well cared for. A small number of responses indicated that parents would like the school to have a more effective way of communicating with the parent community. The school currently uses a number of strategies, including newsletters, blogs and assemblies, to keep parents informed of school activities. Leaders said that they are always looking at ways to improve channels of communication with parents.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed to look at four key areas. The first was to gain information about the work the school is doing to improve attendance at school. This is because there was an increase in absence and persistent absence in 2017.
- Leaders analyse the information generated for the rates of attendance fortnightly. They identify pupils who require additional support to improve attendance, for example through initiatives such as travel expenses and technology to help parents get to school more regularly. As a result, the level of attendance for a number of pupils has improved. Leaders have a sensitive approach to working with families who may be hard to reach. They offer volunteering experiences to build relationships and this has improved the number of parents coming to the variety of events the school holds. Current attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Leaders recognise that, despite the reduction in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school, this work needs to continue to reduce this further.
- We then looked at mathematics and, in particular, how leaders are ensuring that there are better rates of progress for all pupils, in particular middle-ability and disadvantaged pupils. This was because there had been a dip in the rates of progress in 2016 for these groups. I wanted to see that the improvement from 2017 is secure and being sustained, as this had been an area for improvement in the last inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have brought about much change to the way mathematics is being delivered. Their analysis of the historical information on pupils' progress identified that teachers' understanding of the expected standards in the new curriculum was not secure. Training and support from senior leaders have increased teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics, particularly of how to increase the proportion of pupils working at the higher standards. The impact has been that teaching is now more secure. Teachers give pupils regular challenges and more opportunities to develop their learning through skilled teacher questioning. Books seen during the inspection show that pupils are encouraged to choose their challenges, and responses in books show that teachers use feedback well to address misconceptions. The differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers were not obvious when looking at the books of pupils working at the higher standards.
- Recent assessment information shows that improvements from 2017 are being sustained. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils are on track to make strong progress from their starting points. The next step, leaders say, is to further develop mastery for pupils of all abilities to deepen their understanding of their mathematical learning.
- Writing was the third area we investigated, for the same reasons as mathematics. We looked at how leaders are ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop secure writing skills, including grammar and resilience for extended pieces of writing.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have worked hard to develop teachers' skills in

assessing accurately how well their pupils are doing when measuring against the new national curriculum objectives. More challenging texts are being used in class to provide pupils with examples of high-quality writing. The senior leaders have reviewed the curriculum and used research to pick relevant material with which teachers are delivering better-quality writing models.

- The staff have worked effectively with other schools to develop greater confidence in more precise assessment of pupils' progress in writing. The cycle of moderating with other schools, as well as across year groups, has been successful in providing a more accurate overview, particularly of those pupils working at greater depth. Current assessment information, as confirmed by the books seen, shows that the proportion of pupils on track to meet or exceed the expected standard is higher than in previous years for both Year 2 and Year 6. The books of other year groups seen during the inspection – for those pupils working at greater depth – show that standards are improving. However, leaders agree that spelling is an area that requires more work in order to address misconceptions and further improve pupils' work.
- The final area was to look at the way leaders use funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant. I wanted to see if the improvement from the 2017 results is being sustained so that disadvantaged pupils make better progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are a priority for each teacher. They are highlighted in planning, and support is provided when any concerns are identified in the half-termly pupil progress meetings. Through the leaders' monitoring of teachers' planning, pupils' books and lessons, they ensure that the support has the required impact. Current information shows that the disadvantaged children in the early years setting are doing as well as their peers. As the pupils move through the school, the differences are diminishing. Year 6 information shows that a larger proportion of disadvantaged pupils are now working at greater depth in mathematics and writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to develop their understanding of mathematics mastery so that more pupils are working at the higher standards
- the new spelling programme improves pupils' skills when editing their writing
- the school's work to increase the number of targeted pupils attending school continues to improve their attendance.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morgan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, both assistant headteachers, middle leaders and a number of support staff. I held meetings with the school business manager, governors and local authority representative. I observed lessons in most classes alongside members of the senior leadership team. I held discussions with the team of pupil ambassadors. I scrutinised school documents, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour logs, the work of the governors, the school's self-evaluation and the school development plan. I spoke to one parent on the telephone and took into account the 55 responses to the Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered 18 staff responses and 14 pupil responses to the online inspection surveys.