

17 April 2018

Mrs Susan Slack
Headteacher
Gallions Mount Primary School
Purrett Road
Plumstead
London
SE18 1JR

Dear Mrs Slack

Short inspection of Gallions Mount Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 November 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 an accurate and honest understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. From this, you have been able to plan and implement effective strategies that have underpinned the steady improvement in pupils' outcomes, notably in writing and reading. You have also improved pupils' problem-solving skills, an area for improvement identified by the last inspection.

The proportion of pupils who join the school mid-year is increasing. You have ensured that the school is a nurturing, welcoming and caring environment. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. You and your team have established effective partnerships with a range of external services to help meet the needs of pupils and their families. These partnerships have ensured that pupils are well supported. As a result of this support, pupils' overall attendance has improved.

Staff respond well to guidance from senior leaders. Speaking with me, and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff views, staff said that you and other senior colleagues are supportive. They appreciate the opportunities that you give them to help improve the quality of their teaching.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements. All staff have regular and appropriate training. Staff know how to

respond to any concerns should they arise. Leaders understand the challenges faced by vulnerable pupils. Records are well organised and show that referrals are handled in a timely manner, leading to swift support for pupils who need it. The school's safeguarding policy is detailed and gives accurate advice to staff about how to manage any child protection concerns. Leaders are aware of the need to remind staff about how the policy works in practice, for example in relation to whistleblowing procedures.

Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they felt safe and were confident about what to do if they felt unsafe or needed support.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. The first focused on the actions leaders have taken to improve pupils' writing. This was because pupils make substantial progress in writing. For example, by the end of key stage 2, progress is consistently significantly above the national average.
- Leaders and teachers have the highest expectations and aspirations for pupils' writing. A range of exciting experiences, including visits, visitors, drama and access to artefacts and high-quality texts, provide an exciting stimulus for writing. A review of pupils' work across different year groups showed that pupils write often, and at length, and maintain writing of a consistently high quality. Pupils across the school are motivated, attain well and make strong progress in writing. They take pride in their work and as pupils move from one year to the next, their writing stamina increases, and their writing improves in maturity and technical accuracy.
- Leaders have already identified and are working on the need to develop further the way that teachers check standards of writing across all year groups.
- The second line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of phonics teaching. This was because the proportion of pupils successfully meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has marginally declined since 2015.
- Leaders have addressed weaknesses in phonics teaching by ensuring greater consistency and improving teachers' confidence. Teaching is now better at supporting pupils to apply their phonics knowledge when reading and writing. Pupils who read to me were motivated about reading and read with fluency. They talked confidently about how they enjoy reading and how they develop their reading skills.
- However, teachers are not fully skilled at spotting when pupils are ready to move on in their learning. When pupils demonstrate that they confidently know the letters and sounds that they are learning, teachers do not routinely challenge pupils to help them make strong progress.
- The final line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve outcomes in mathematics. This is because in 2017, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was weaker than it was in reading and writing.
- You have prioritised improving the teaching of mathematics, including the introduction of a new mathematics curriculum. This is providing a greater opportunity for pupils to apply their mathematics knowledge and to develop their problem-solving skills. As a result, teachers are now ensuring that pupils are developing a broader range of mathematical knowledge and skills.

- The school's assessment information and a detailed review of pupils' work suggest that pupils make better progress in mathematics this year. Pupils demonstrate that they have mastered certain skills that help them to solve complex problems. However, pupils have not had as much practice at developing their reasoning skills to help deepen their understanding further.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the progress that has been made in embedding the new mathematics curriculum. Teachers do not, however, routinely respond flexibly to pupils' needs, for example by ensuring that those new to the school or lower-attaining pupils are supported and challenged appropriately.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in mathematics enables pupils to develop their reasoning skills to deepen their understanding
- teachers use assessment information to move pupils on to more challenging learning activities, particularly in phonics and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Nick Turvey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection began with a discussion of your self-evaluation and we agreed the lines of enquiry. Together, we visited classes and looked at pupils' work. I listened to groups of pupils read. I also spoke with pupils about their learning and how the school helps to keep them safe. I held meetings with leaders of English and mathematics. I met a group of governors and also met a representative of the local authority. I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and single central record of employment checks. I also considered responses to the staff survey, pupil survey and Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents.