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Mr Michael Kaitell
Deputy Headteacher
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Dear Mr Kaitell

Short inspection of Hunters Hall Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 2018 with Paula Farrow, 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have addressed the key issues raised. For example, leaders are now confident in using assessment information to analyse how well pupils progress. You, the leadership team and a proactive governing body have an accurate 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 improvement in pupils' outcomes at the end of each key stage, in reading, mathematics and, most notably, in writing.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school. Pupils say that they enjoy their time at school. Staff respond well to senior leadership. Speaking with me, and in their responses to Ofsted's online survey, staff say that you and other senior colleagues are supportive. They appreciate the opportunities they are given to help improve the quality of their teaching and to develop their professional careers.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements. All staff have regular and appropriate training. Staff who spoke with me were knowledgeable and understood how to respond to any concerns should they arise. Records are well organised and show that referrals are handled in a timely manner, leading to swift support for pupils who need it.

Leaders have ensured that systems for tracking pupils' attendance and punctuality are more robust. As a result, attendance is improving steadily. Overall attendance, since the start of the year, has risen and is now in line with the national average. The proportion of persistent absence has reduced significantly.

Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey were overwhelmingly positive about pupils' safety in school. This view was echoed by pupils spoken to during the inspection, who said they felt safe and were confident about what to do if they felt unsafe or in need of support.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. The first focused on leaders' actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children in the early years and key stage 1. This was because the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils have been lower than those of other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children enter the early years with attainment typically below that expected for their age. Leaders have responded to this by planning and implementing new initiatives across the early years and key stage 1 to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve better outcomes. Leaders have put in place intervention groups for specific pupils and workshops for families. Teachers are effectively using a language-rich environment across the curriculum. Together, these actions have resulted in disadvantaged pupils achieving better outcomes in reading, mathematics and, most notably, in writing.
- Many of the initiatives are new and, although well thought through, are yet to impact fully on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1. The recently introduced approach to mathematics, for example, is enabling pupils to demonstrate their understanding from practical learning in a more abstract way. At this stage, however, pupils have not had the opportunity to apply their mathematical learning when solving problems.
- The second line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of leaders' actions to improve the progress made by the most able pupils in reading and mathematics across key stage 2. This was because in the 2016 and 2017 published outcomes, the most able pupils made slower progress in these subjects than other pupils.
- Learning walks with leaders showed that pupils are exposed to a range of literature that extends their vocabulary and understanding of sentence structure. This is then transferred into their writing and is sustained well. Pupils who read to me were motivated readers who read widely, frequently and were familiar with a range of authors and their work. Pupils read with confidence, expression and intonation and demonstrated a good understanding of the text. The texts chosen, however, did not always match pupils' reading ability. This resulted in pupils either completing tasks with ease or not having a secure enough understanding of the text to access the learning effectively.
- A detailed review of pupils' work in mathematics showed that pupils experience a wide range of learning that increases in complexity. For example, pupils are challenged to use more complex numbers, mathematical strategies and

operations, and they have opportunities to apply their skills when solving problems. Poor presentation in some mathematics books, however, leads to inaccurate responses that are not routinely picked up. As a result, misconceptions are sometimes repeated. It was also evident that most-able pupils often spend too much time practising mathematics they have already demonstrated they are capable of. This limits the opportunity for these pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning skills and ability to explain their thinking, which would deepen their understanding.

- The third line of enquiry focused on the impact of the curriculum on pupils' outcomes. This line of enquiry was in response to you and the leadership team identifying the curriculum as a particular strength of the school.
- Learning walks with leaders, a review of pupils' work and discussions with those responsible for leading the curriculum demonstrate that leaders are passionate about ensuring a breadth of curriculum coverage. There is a commitment to ensuring that pupils benefit from a range of experiences. Both the school's own assessment information and published national assessment information suggest that this breadth is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes throughout the school. Newly appointed curriculum leaders have been involved in a variety of monitoring activities to give them a secure baseline for further actions. Their judgements about the curriculum and its impact are accurate, and this has allowed them to develop appropriate plans for future improvements.
- The curriculum gives pupils opportunity to develop a range of knowledge, understanding and skill. As a result, pupils use increasingly complex vocabulary precisely and are motivated to learn about different places and people. The school's environment celebrates the breadth of the curriculum and fundamental British values, as well as celebrating the range of experiences, in and beyond the school, available to the pupils. Use is not always made, however, of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, meaning some pupils are insufficiently challenged, repeating learning they have already mastered.
- Senior leaders have already identified the need for a more systematic approach to tracking the progress pupils make in areas other than English and mathematics. This will ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve well across the curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recently introduced initiatives designed to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils are embedded to make sure that all pupils have the opportunity to reason, justify and explain their mathematical thinking
- teachers are more skilled at using their assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge to help them move on to more challenging learning activities rather than repeat learning they are already capable of
- leaders can track pupils' progress across the curriculum beyond English and mathematics in a more systematic way so that all pupils are able to make good

progress through classroom provision that is well planned and sets expectations for high standards.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Barking and Dagenham. 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 key lines of enquiry. Together, we visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I listened to a group of pupils reading. I also spoke with pupils about their learning and how the school helps to keep them safe. Meetings were held with those responsible for leading the curriculum, safeguarding and use of the pupil premium. I met a group of governors and also a representative of the local authority. I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and the single central record of recruitment checks. I also considered the responses to the staff survey, pupil survey and Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.