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Mrs Clare D'Netto
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs D'Netto

Short inspection of Manor Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The governors appointed you as the headteacher, and you took up your post in September 2017. The ambition that you and other leaders have for pupils is evident in the improvements you have made. The values of motivation, joy, success, enthusiasm, respect, inclusion and challenge permeate throughout the school.

You have quickly developed a team of aspirational and committed leaders that understand the strengths of the school and know what needs to be done next. The leadership team is focused on driving improvements in a systematic and planned way, including those identified at the time of the previous inspection, which have been addressed successfully. All leaders know which groups of pupils are underperforming. The termly cohort action planning meetings ensure that leaders analyse the achievement of each pupil. As a result, leaders swiftly put in place plans for any pupil falling behind.

You have developed a curriculum that inspires pupils. It includes integrating subjects, so that pupils are challenged, and motivates them to take part in the activities planned for them to deepen their thinking skills, as well as learning new content. The new curriculum is already having an impact, with good-quality literature linked to each theme. For example, in lessons and in pupils' books, I observed Year 4 learning about the way that tudor life impacted on the local area and the rule of law. This topic was linked to 'My friend Walter', Michael Morpurgo's

book about Sir Walter Raleigh. In addition, the teachers plan a range of relevant learning experiences, such as pupils writing extended pieces about the monarchs of the period, finding out about Shakespeare's Globe through independent study at home, and an educational visit to Eastbury Manor House. However, you rightly identified that the new curriculum has not yet had the time to embed and ensure that all groups of pupils, especially the most able, reach high levels of attainment.

You have successfully increased communication with parents. Parents spoke about being confident to raise any issue, however small, and knowing it would be dealt with quickly. They value the emphasis that leaders place on promoting children's good mental health, and the additional support that is given to children when necessary. One parent spoke for many when she said, 'The headteacher is like a breath of fresh air; so positive. Nothing is too much trouble.' Parent participation in the life of the school has increased. A large number of parents and volunteers came together to build the eco garden, which is well used and valued by the pupils.

Parents also commented on the helpful information they receive about their children's learning, and the opportunity to participate in parent partnership meetings. They appreciate the regular feedback they receive about their children's progress. A minority of parents said that they would like their children to complete more challenging work.

Leaders continue to develop a happy, harmonious school community. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They enjoy school and engage positively with visitors. Prefects greet their peers at the beginning of the school day with a friendly welcome and a big smile. Pupils work co-operatively in group activities that are skilfully organised by their teachers. Pupils enjoy the range of leadership opportunities on offer for them, whether as healthy lifestyle leaders, charity ambassadors, learning leaders, school council members or digital leaders. One charity ambassador took pride in telling me she had raised money for a local hospice. The school council delivered a thoughtful assembly that made pupils reflect on mutual respect, including a pupil confidently playing a song from popular culture on the clarinet.

Governors take an active role in the school, and are well informed by leaders. They benefit from detailed analysis and reports presented to them by year group leaders about the achievement of pupils. Governors focus on how pupils are doing and whether their achievement is good enough. The local authority has every confidence in the school and you have developed a strong working relationship with them.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. When you started at the school, you rightly carried out a thorough audit of safeguarding and decided that it required a team of three knowledgeable leaders. Records show that concerns about pupils are rigorously followed up with appropriate referrals to social care. Action plans put in place by leaders are

monitored and reviewed regularly. These ensure effective support for children, where referrals do not meet the threshold for social care. Recruitment checks to help keep children safe are carried out meticulously, with records that are thorough and well organised. Staff I spoke with were able to tell me about the training they have received and know exactly what to do if they have worries about a pupil. Pupils say they feel safe and parents agree.

Inspection findings

- Progress and attainment of most-able pupils in reading was an area of focus for this inspection because the progress and attainment of this group of pupils dipped last year.
- You have made sure that reading is central to pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff receive targeted professional development. Pupils read every day and say they appreciate their reading records being checked by their teachers. I asked a pupil what would happen if they did not read at home every day, and he said, 'I don't know because I always do it. I want to.' Leaders have successfully embedded a culture where pupils express a love of reading. In the classes we visited, all pupils were highly involved in their reading books. For example, in Year 5 pupils were confidently discussing, clarifying and summarising the content of what they were reading. They were also challenging each other, respectfully, when they did not agree with a classmate's answer.
- Current Year 6 assessment information for reading shows that a higher percentage of pupils have achieved greater depth in reading compared to the same point last year. Pupils of all abilities are being given access to high-quality books, and extracts that challenge them and develop their understanding of current affairs. Pupils like it when teachers and other pupils recommend books for each other to read. Pupils were proud of their reading challenge to read 40 books. One pupil said, 'I read seven good books and my favourite was 'Lost' by Gillian Cross'. Leaders have correctly recognised that some pupils are too reliant on adults to find out the meanings of vocabulary, rather than exploring other strategies that would develop their reading further.
- During the inspection, we agreed to check what actions leaders are taking that contribute to maintaining the strong attainment and progress in mathematics. Leaders have high expectations, support teachers' development of subject knowledge, and ensure that there are resources to support learning. They also check that class teachers use these effectively. This ensures good teacher subject knowledge, implementation of effective lesson plans, and contributes significantly to the good outcomes for pupils in mathematics.
- My review of pupils' mathematical capability showed that they have positive attitudes, take pride in their work and enjoy consolidating their understanding through a range of tasks graded in difficulty. Current assessment information shows that a greater percentage of pupils are achieving at a higher level in mathematics compared to the same point last year. Pupils enjoy multiplication games and competitions and teachers encourage the use of mathematical language. Consequently, pupils are confident learners. Pupils learn the four operations in mathematics and apply them accurately, such as when calculating

the perimeter of composite rectilinear shapes. Mathematical equipment, including cubes, are used effectively to support lower-ability pupils. For example, pupils in Year 3 who struggled with single unit multiplication at the beginning of the year can now multiply three-digit numbers with ease.

- Our final line of enquiry was to discover what had successfully brought about the significant decrease in persistent absence since 2016. Notably, leaders have focused diligently on the attendance of pupils who are persistently absent. The attendance team, ably led by the deputy headteacher, has a thorough understanding of the patterns of non-attendance, and what contributes to this. Pupils enjoy receiving a variety of rewards for good attendance, and wear their badges with pride. Strategies adopted by the attendance team to support families and their children have increased the attendance of individual pupils. Current data shows that this approach is having a positive impact on attendance, and that the decrease in persistent absence is being maintained.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- The new curriculum is effectively embedded across all subjects so that all groups of pupils, especially the most able pupils, attain highly.

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

Rebekah Iiyambo
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, we visited classrooms together and talked to pupils about their work. We scrutinised learning in pupils' workbooks. I visited an assembly and the playground at lunchtime, as well as speaking with pupils and staff. I listened to pupils read. I checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and records, including records on the recruitment of staff. I met with leaders, governors and a representative from the local governing body. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, other external reports about the school and governing body minutes. I considered 19 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire, 40 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, 23 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 20 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service. I also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.