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Mrs Natalie Sanchez
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sanchez

Short inspection of Marsh Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 May 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 June 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 proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations by the end of Year 6 continues to be well above the national average. Changes in the leadership structure since the last inspection have enabled the school to build its capacity further. As a result, the strategic actions that leaders have taken have been sustained and have led to improved outcomes for pupils. Leaders have focused on ensuring that, in mathematics, the most able pupils are challenged to make sustained progress. The impact of this work is evident, particularly in key stage 2, where pupils' progress and attainment have improved. Senior leaders are not complacent and are continuing this work to ensure that the most able pupils in key stage 1 achieve similar success.

Pupils are happy, have positive attitudes to learning and feel proud of their school. They are confident, behave well and enjoy a range of subjects. Parents and carers report that the care and dedication of staff ensure that their children develop well, both academically and personally. Staff know pupils well and they tailor learning to meet the needs of individual children. The school regularly admits pupils who come from overseas, have no English or have never attended school. Leaders ensure that new arrivals feel safe, settle quickly and learn the skills they need to adapt to school life. Leaders' close work with pupils and parents has created a cohesive community within a very diverse context. Relationships within the school and with the local community are strong.

Safeguarding is effective.

The senior leadership team has ensured that record-keeping is of a high standard and that arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. Staff are regularly kept up to date with information about their safeguarding duty. Key leaders and governors have also received relevant training to ensure that safe recruitment practices are undertaken. Records seen on the day of the inspection indicate that the school is rigorous in its employment procedures. Staff and volunteers are inducted well and are vigilant in their approach. As a result, pupils who are at risk are identified promptly and receive timely support. Leaders work closely with external agencies and the local authority to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are protected. Systems to monitor pupil absence and to prevent pupils from going missing are strong because of leaders' persistence.

Pupils report that they feel safe. They value the efforts by adults to protect them from harm and to teach them to protect themselves, for example when online. Governors hold the school stringently to account for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry related to whether leaders have taken effective action to reduce absence and persistent absence for current pupils. This was a focus because, since the last inspection, rates of absence had been increasing, including for disadvantaged pupils. I discussed with senior leaders the strategies they have used and how they have evaluated their impact. I also looked at information on current attendance rates.
- Systems and procedures to monitor attendance for all groups of pupils, including vulnerable pupils, are rigorous. Pupil absence is followed up immediately, especially for pupils who have child protection concerns. The attendance manager builds relationships with vulnerable families who find it difficult to get children to school. External agencies are involved when necessary to provide additional support. The school supports families well and sets high expectations for attendance. Pupils are encouraged to attend school daily through termly attendance newsletters, rewards and a focus in weekly assemblies.
- As a result of leaders' work, pupil absence had reduced by the end of the last academic year. Persistent absence had also halved to well below the national average. Attendance so far this academic year is just above the national average and persistent absence has continued to be low. Absence and persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils have also reduced considerably.
- A second focus for the inspection explored the work by leaders to increase the level of challenge for most-able pupils in mathematics at key stage 2. This was an area for development at the last inspection and has been a focus for the school since then. I concentrated on how teachers enabled pupils with higher starting points to continue to achieve at a high standard.
- I conducted joint observations with the mathematics leader in lessons across the key stages. We looked at pupils' mathematics work over time. I also had discussions with middle leaders and governors about the effectiveness of the

school's work in this area. Pupils are taught well in mathematics and, as a result, make good or better progress.

- Actions by leaders since the last inspection have ensured that pupils with high prior attainment are challenged to continue achieving highly by the end of their next key stage. There has been a consistent whole-school approach that has enabled all pupils to be challenged from their starting points. Staff make use of training and resources to prepare lessons that are well planned to meet pupils' individual needs. Pupils' books reflect the high expectations of all pupils.
- Progress in key stage 1 is not as strong as in key stage 2, particularly for those with high starting points. Leaders are aware of this and will be focusing on embedding mathematics mastery in key stage 1 as part of their continued development of the subject.
- Another line of enquiry related to pupils' literacy development from Reception to Year 2. I looked at how well the curriculum enables pupils with low starting points to reach age-related expectations in reading and writing. I was also interested in how well disadvantaged pupils progress in literacy. I observed phonics lessons in Reception and Year 2, as well as English lessons across the school. I looked at writing in pupils' books and the school's information on how pupils are performing.
- Leaders know pupils and their starting points well. This includes a number of pupils who start school after Reception and those who have no knowledge of English. Staff are able to identify their needs and the gaps in their knowledge very quickly. Small-group or individual support by teachers ensures that pupils make very good progress in learning to read and write. Phonics teaching is well targeted to meet pupils' needs. In Reception and Year 2, pupils demonstrate the ability to recall sounds and apply them to reading new words. They have a number of strategies to read unknown words independently.
- Vocabulary teaching is a key strategy and a strength across the school. As a result, pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2, including those new to English, have a wide vocabulary. They read fluently and demonstrate good understanding when they read. The quality of writing across the school indicates high expectations and that pupils are achieving well. Due to their low starting points, some pupils are still behind in their literacy by the end of Year 2. Leaders are aware of this and, thanks to support, more pupils are now approaching age-related expectations.
- I also looked closely at the school's cultural education programme, including the views of staff, pupils, parents and governors. I considered how well this work supports pupils' personal development. The school has a long tradition of providing opportunities for all pupils to train and perform in different performing arts. This includes developing the talents of those who may want to enter the creative industry in the future. They regularly perform for audiences locally and have featured in London shows and on national television. The vast majority of pupils take part in at least one activity and many have performed beyond the school. As a result, pupils are very confident, articulate and independent.
- They enjoy experiencing and learning from a range of cultures. For example,

African drumming and Bollywood dancing are favourites of pupils of all backgrounds. Parents report that the school community is very inclusive and harmonious because everyone has equal access to these opportunities. They believe that pupils are well prepared for wider life in Britain and gain the confidence needed for secondary school. This programme is integral to the school's success because it drives pupils' motivation to be at school and achieve well. It has had a positive impact on pupils' attendance and their aspirations. Parental engagement also continues to be strong.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- new staff continue to develop their skills and there is increased consistency in the quality of teaching
- middle leaders regularly evaluate the impact of their work to identify and refine the actions they need to take.

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

Karla Martin-Theodore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The key lines of enquiry for this inspection examined leaders' and managers' impact on the progress of most-able pupils in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 and of pupils with lower starting points in reading and writing in key stage 1. The inspection also looked at how leaders have improved attendance and provided a rich cultural curriculum that supports pupils' personal development.

I met with you, the senior management team, staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. I also met with the school improvement partner. I interviewed a group of pupils and had a discussion with a sample of parents after school. I looked at information provided by the school, including the school's safeguarding records, policies and procedures and the single central record of recruitment checks. I looked at the school's assessment of its performance and information about pupils' progress. Lessons were visited, including in phonics, writing and mathematics.