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Mrs Sharon Nacmias
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Nacmias

Short inspection of Crownfield Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 22 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. You have set high expectations for what pupils can achieve. These expectations are based on the school's key values: 'to involve, inform and improve'. You have high aspirations for all your pupils in your relentless pursuit of preparing 'all children to become independent lifelong learners'. Your school prides itself in explicitly providing children with a warm and friendly environment in which to grow and prosper. A strength of the school is pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They work hard to support each other, are polite and resilient and take pride in their school.

You provide clear direction for the school's future improvement. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Comments such as, 'Communication is phenomenal', and 'The school is brilliant' are typical of their viewpoint. Parents understand that teachers know their children well and, where necessary, additional support is provided. You focus strongly on educational, personal and social development to meet the needs of your community. You do this through a curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to participate in a broad range of learning activities. You prepare pupils very well for the next stage in their education.

You have established an effective senior leadership team. Together, you have led effective improvements in teaching and addressed the aspects for

improvement that were identified in the previous inspection. You have identified appropriate priorities to continue to improve the school.

Children in the early years make good progress given their starting points and capabilities. Pupils in Year 1 achieve above the national average in the phonics screening check. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 2, attainment in writing and mathematics is broadly in line with the national averages. Leaders rightly identified, however, that performance in reading in the 2017 key stage 1 assessments was below that for writing and mathematics. You put in place a full range of strategies to support pupils in the classroom and in additional sessions. For example, you have set reading challenges to reward pupils who read the most frequently at home and introduced more challenging texts for pupils. In each class, you have established a stimulating book corner where pupils can sit quietly and read. You use the school library well and have ambitious plans to develop your bus library. The quality of teaching and learning continues to be a focus for the leadership team in its drive to ensure that classroom practice is of consistently high quality. You agree that, although attendance is improving, it is too low for specific groups of pupils.

Governors have a good understanding of the school. Their knowledge of the local community and their range of skills enable them to support school improvement well. Governors use a range of information effectively to challenge school leaders. They ensure that their regular visits to school enable them to see, first hand, the work of school leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are effective and records are robust. All checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in place. Staff and governors have a strong understanding of current safeguarding guidance. They take this responsibility seriously and are effective at all levels. Training for staff means that they are clear about the use of 'worry notes', child protection procedures and what to do if they have a concern. Leaders work well with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive well-targeted support, as required.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using online technology. School assemblies and workshops help pupils and parents to understand how to manage risks online. Pupils and parents spoken to agree that the school is a safe place in which to learn.

Inspection findings

- I looked at the actions that the school has taken to improve pupils' outcomes in reading across the school. This was because, in 2017, attainment in reading was low for all pupils by the end of Year 2. In

2016, reading was well below the national figure for specific groups. The school has recognised this, and ensuring that all pupils make good progress in reading is a priority for leaders.

- On our visits to lessons, we saw that children in the Nursery Year are encouraged to practise their speaking skills and to talk in full sentences. They are confident in forming letters. Stimulating texts and displays reinforce important vocabulary. Children enjoy their daily phonics sessions. Learning nursery rhymes supports them well in developing their understanding of rhyme and rhythm in language. In the Reception Year, children use their interests to develop their early literacy skills, for example, creating a dinosaur trail while adults consistently engage with them. Displays are linked to good-quality stories, which engage everyone. In key stage 1, pupils confidently explained the meaning of a digraph. They pronounce words in simple sentences using the strategies they have learned. Pupils across the school are enthusiastic in their daily phonics sessions.
- The additional strategies you have introduced have been effective. They rightly concentrate on working in partnership with parents to increase the frequency of reading. Ideas for sharing books with their children have been developed into a school leaflet. Evidence from reading records seen shows that pupils are reading often at home. This is recognised by the recently introduced home reading reward scheme. The introduction of better-quality texts, which appeal especially to boys, engages all pupils. Additional phonics sessions for identified Years 1 and 2 pupils enable learning to be accelerated. The use of video technology to model rhymes and sounds helps parents to support reading at home. The school rightly focuses on improving pupils' comprehension skills. Book baskets with interesting texts have been introduced for each class. Each teacher reads a book to the class so that the pupils know it well. This knowledge helps pupils to improve their writing by expanding their vocabulary. Year 2 pupils that I heard read are making good progress. They read with increasing confidence and fluency. Their knowledge of phonics helps them read unfamiliar words. However, they do not sufficiently use their comprehension skills in making sense of more challenging texts.
- For the second line of enquiry, we agreed to look at how the school's curriculum supports diminishing differences between disadvantaged pupils and others. This was because the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is inconsistent. From 2015 to 2017, disadvantaged pupils did not perform as well as others. Leaders are aware of the need to focus on the progress of these pupils.
- You have revised support for these pupils to ensure that it is effective. You used evidence from research prior to implementing the new strategies. These include early years intervention, parental involvement, individual instruction and a full range of after-school activities. Additional support is identified early. We saw how pupils' specific needs are met well. For example, pupils were absorbed in creating a vehicle using

construction materials to develop their social interaction skills. They listened to instructions from their peers and responded positively. You and your team have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that the quality of teaching in foundation subjects matches that in English and mathematics. You have raised expectations. You ensure that all your pupils develop positive attitudes and take on a range of responsibilities, for example, the role of class ambassadors. This promotes their self-confidence well and encourages them to do better. Teachers' questioning is effective in deepening understanding for all pupils. The school's breakfast club supports targeted pupils in a range of activities. Senior leaders systematically monitor the progress of all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils. The work that I reviewed in pupils' books shows that this group makes good progress in English, mathematics and topic work. The school's most recent assessment information shows that gaps are diminishing.

- Finally, I looked at how leaders' actions have helped improve attendance and reduce the proportion of persistent absentees. This was because attendance was below the national average in 2017 and was low for specific groups in 2015 and 2016. Leaders have identified attendance as a priority in the school improvement plan. Leaders have high expectations and have ensured that strategies are in place for attendance to improve.
- There are displays to encourage good attendance. Each week, the class with the highest attendance is celebrated in assembly. The school regularly celebrates those pupils with good attendance. There is a greater emphasis on working closely with parents, especially when their children first start school. Regular newsletters remind parents of the importance of full attendance. Senior leaders' work is effectively supported by the home-school support worker. This enables the school to prioritise those pupils with low attendance.
- The senior leadership team monitors attendance information and ensures that low attendance is followed up. Although attendance for all pupils is now in line with the national average, the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils is too low. Persistent absence for a number of these pupils remains too high.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on pupils' good phonics skills by further developing their comprehension skills so that they can better understand increasingly challenging texts
- overall attendance improves for all pupils, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Barnes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I carried out the following activities:

- met with the headteacher and senior leaders
- met with middle leaders
- held a meeting with members of the governing body
- held a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner
- listened to pupils read
- listened to the views of 10 parents
- reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and information about pupils' progress and attendance
- scrutinised a range of pupils' work
- reviewed the school's single central record of staff suitability, pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures
- scrutinised the school's website
- considered 164 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View
- considered 41 responses to the staff survey
- visited lessons in classes with members of the leadership team.