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Ms Sine Brown
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Brown

Short inspection of Godwin Junior 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 and the deputy headteacher are new in post since then. You have built a strong team of senior leaders, sharing your vision for the school's future. Leaders and governors evaluate rigorously the school's performance to identify priorities for improvement. Action is then based on careful research to identify good practice, whether it meets the school's needs and how it can be best implemented. As a result, pupils continue to make good progress. Leaders are also continuing to tackle some slight inconsistencies to the teaching of reading and mathematics that hold back progress in both subjects.

The governing body has a sharp understanding of the school from which to question leaders. Strong local authority support has helped sharpen action planning and given an external view of the school's success in meeting its targets.

Leaders have maintained and built upon the strengths identified at the previous inspection. You have kept a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching to bring about sustained improvements. Teachers greatly value working in groups to develop aspects of their teaching. They have also embraced filming themselves in action as this enables them to reflect on their practice.

You and your staff team ensure that the school is very calm and orderly. Pupils told me that the excellent behaviour during my visit is typical of their daily experiences. Pupils were seen to take a deep interest in learning and pride in their work. They were very attentive and enjoyed sharing ideas and rehearsing answers in discussion

with a partner. They responded thoughtfully to their teacher's 'agree, build-on, challenge' style of questioning.

Your team is also successful in promoting the school's values, as expressed through the '5Cs' of 'Consideration, Courtesy, Cooperation, Commitment and Care'. One pupil told me how being a 'Rights Respecting School' helps them know they should care for each other. School council members understand their role. One said, 'You must remember that those who voted for you are putting their trust in you, even if you don't always agree with their views.'

Leaders have designed the curriculum so that subject skills develop systematically as pupils move through the school. The pupils' experiences are greatly enriched by regular educational visits and a wide range of after-school clubs.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality. Leaders have developed a strong safeguarding culture among staff. Regular training maintains their awareness of the signs to look out for and what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Leaders identify strong practice elsewhere and how it can be implemented in the school. Close links with a variety of external agencies provide information about pupils who might be vulnerable. These agencies also provide additional expertise to help you support these pupils and their families.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school. Their parents and carers agree that the school cares for their children and takes steps to ensure that they are kept safe. Pupils develop the skills they need to identify risks and stay safe through a wide range of activities. Safeguarding measures include undertaking risk assessments before going on each educational visit. Leaders maintain a major focus on staying safe online through training for pupils and guidance for parents. Other activities for pupils include work on cycling safety and how to stay safe when travelling on public transport and when walking to school.

Inspection findings

- We identified three areas for investigation during my visit. The first of these was to explore why the pupils' progress in mathematics has not been as strong as in reading and writing. Your analysis had identified that pupils did not recall previous learning quickly as they did not always have a deep understanding of concepts. Pupils also were not always able to explain clearly the reasons that underpinned their answers.
- You and governors identified deepening understanding and developing the pupils' reasoning skills as key priorities for improvement. Following careful research, you have taken on a new teaching programme with support from a local school. Teachers now introduce new concepts through practical activities before moving to the abstract. Pupils regularly apply their new skills to solving problems and undertaking mathematical investigations. Teachers promote pupils' reasoning

skills in a variety of ways. This includes explaining orally and in writing the reasons for their answers and why the answer to a question is incorrect before correcting it.

- Despite this action, there remains some variation in the development of these skills between classes. Training has given teachers greater confidence and expertise. The pupils' calculation and manipulation skills remain accurate. Many can explain clearly the reasons behind their answers, but this is not consistently seen across all classes. Leaders have recognised that some teachers need further support and time to embed new methods fully in their practice.
- We next decided to look at the school's work to promote stronger progress and higher attainment in reading. We chose this because there was a difference between the school's anticipated and actual key stage 2 test results in 2017. You identified that the pupils did not always have a secure understanding of the vocabulary needed. This meant they did not make the progress you wanted in developing the wider reading skills of comprehension, inference and deduction.
- Your careful evaluation of the methods teachers used to teach reading showed you that some activities were not sharply focused on key skills. This was when pupils undertook tasks by themselves while the teacher worked with another small group. Research, supported by staff training, has led to a change in the teaching programme. Reading is taught over a two-week cycle. During the first week, teachers focus sharply on helping pupils gain meaning from the text they are studying. The second week is spent applying newly learned vocabulary in their writing or completing comprehension tasks. Each classroom now has a display of new vocabulary, along with definitions, including that needed in different subjects.
- Evidence indicates that this action is starting to have a positive impact. Pupils' comprehension skills have improved and they now readily turn to the text to justify their answers. Pupils show their growing confidence and understanding by using new vocabulary accurately in their writing. Some inconsistencies remain. Leaders have recognised that this approach needs continuing to deepen further pupils' understanding of vocabulary, its meaning and application.
- The final area we selected to explore was the progress of pupils receiving additional support. We chose this area because pupils with specific learning needs and those supported by the pupil premium had been making slower progress than other pupils in each year group. Their attainment had also been lower than other pupils nationally in key stage 2 assessments. This was another area you and governors had identified as a priority for improvement.
- You have changed the way in which you check on the progress of identified pupils. You have raised the profile of individual pupils by undertaking this check alongside teachers and making them more accountable for individual progress. During each check, you evaluate tailored programmes of support and change them if unsuccessful or completed. Any programmes requiring withdrawal from class are carefully timetabled to avoid pupils missing the same subject regularly.
- The school has also focused on raising aspirations for these pupils. This includes making visits to universities and visits from outside speakers to talk about the

range of skills and choices available to them in the future. The 'Brilliant Club' and 'Debate Mate', for example, have both significantly raised pupils' confidence and their ability to discuss constructively.

- The 'Catch-up literacy' programme and reading to volunteers have considerably benefited the progress in reading of these pupils. Pupils I spoke with told me how helpful they find targets in their books because their teachers give them immediate feedback about how they are getting on. Evidence, including the school's assessment data, suggests that this change of focus is working. These pupils are now making much improved progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new programmes for teaching mathematics and reading are fully embedded across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- I met you, your senior team and the English and mathematics leaders. I met four governors, including the chair of governors. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- You accompanied me when I visited parts of lessons. I also observed pupils as they moved around the school.
- I met with two groups of pupils to discuss their experiences of school.
- I took account of the 65 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also took account of the 35 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 75 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training and safeguarding checks.