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Miss Julie Maltwood
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Maltwood

Short inspection of South Grove Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection.

Since the previous inspection, you have continued to drive improvement in each aspect of the school's work. You have the trust and support of parents, carers and staff. Several parents explained that, although they had moved away from the local area, their children continue to attend South Grove Primary School despite considerable journeys. This is testament to the value they place on the education that you and your team provide. They praise your work highly and give numerous examples of how their children have benefited from the school's provision. These include the musical and sporting extra-curricular opportunities available to pupils. Parents also value the roles of responsibility, which develop pupils' sense of pride. They describe the school as having a 'family feel'. This supportive and caring environment forms the basis for your carefully thought-out approaches to ensuring that each pupil does as well as he or she can. Your work to ensure that pupils are tolerant of the views and beliefs of others is highly effective. I visited an assembly, during which pupils contributed to a discussion about rights. Pupils openly celebrated their own beliefs while demonstrating respect for the views, beliefs and religions of others.

You are highly principled in your approach. Your evaluation of the school's work is

both detailed and accurate. This informs your thorough and research-based development planning, each aspect of which is carefully considered. Rather than merely identifying actions to take to improve the school, you base these on evidenced need. Similarly, you are clear about the intended impact of your actions on pupils' outcomes.

Governors know the school well. As a result of the broad range of expertise represented on the governing body, governors have the right knowledge and skills to challenge and support you and your team effectively. The information you provide for governors, combined with the visits they make to the school, ensures that they are well informed. This enables them to ask searching and helpful questions during meetings to explore the effectiveness of the school's work. Governors understand the importance of seeking external views of the school's work and, consequently, receive reports from a local authority representative.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the staff responsible for overseeing the checks made when recruiting staff take them very seriously. You often go above and beyond what is required in order to reassure yourselves that adults are suitable to work with children.

As a result of their training, staff are clear about the procedures to follow should they need to share any concerns about children's well-being. Similarly, they are aware of the agreed procedures to disclose any concerns about members of staff. You liaise with the Metropolitan Police and other agencies to ensure that information is shared effectively. You also liaise promptly and effectively with the local authority in cases where pupils leave the school. This helps to reassure you that pupils are safe and that those concerned are sure of their whereabouts.

Pupils list numerous strategies which are in place to keep them safe. They know that the gates are supervised at the start of the day, that they close promptly, and that there are agreed procedures for collection at the end of the day. Pupils know they can speak with the anti-bullying ambassadors should they have any concerns. They have confidence in the adults at school to sort out any issues that arise. The curriculum includes effective teaching of strategies to use should pupils become concerned, or should they find themselves in particular predicaments. Pupils spoken to understand the importance of referring any concerns they have about their online safety to a trusted adult.

Parents spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in their agreement that the school provides a safe environment for their children. This view is supported by parents' responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. The results of the staff questionnaire also align with this view.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to explore the extent to which the numerous strengths noted at the previous inspection have been maintained. You and your team

continue to demonstrate high expectations. My review of pupils' books highlighted the precision with which teachers review pupils' work. Teaching is precise. Adults respond quickly to the assessment information they glean during lessons in order to promote pupils' progress. This means that lesson time is used well and that pupils are prevented from dwelling on misconceptions.

- An area for improvement in the previous inspection report was to ensure that expectations of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are high. During my visit to the special resourced provision, pupils were well supported while they worked on tailored programmes of work. Their targets are reviewed regularly, as are the resources selected to support their learning. Your expectations of the pupils who attend this provision, many of whom have complex needs, are high. They are shared by the staff who work directly with the pupils.
- My second line of enquiry was to explore what has led to pupils' strong outcomes in English and mathematics in recent years. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was well above the national average. Similarly, pupils' progress was significantly above average in each subject. This has consistently been the case in recent years. My discussions with phase leaders and middle leaders confirmed that they have a thorough understanding of pupils' performance in their areas of responsibility. The training they have received has provided them with the skills and confidence they need. They are not afraid to be innovative because they know that you are always looking to improve the quality of provision and that, together, leaders evaluate the impact of the strategies you employ.
- In 2017, there was a slight dip in the proportion of pupils making very strong progress from high starting points in reading. Your disappointment in this has led you and your team to consider the teaching of reading and to increase the emphasis given to the teaching of the higher-level skills across the curriculum. These include pupils' ability to infer meaning from a text rather than interpret it literally. You have also increased your focus on developing pupils' discussion and debating skills. This enables pupils to explore concepts and the content of texts in greater detail. The school's assessment information indicates that a greater proportion of pupils are likely to reach the high standard in reading this year.
- I was also keen to understand how effective the school's curriculum is in subjects other than English and mathematics. It is apparent through scrutinising pupils' work that expectations are equally high throughout the curriculum. Pupils are expected to apply what has been learned in English and mathematics in other subjects. You have made effective links between subjects, in order to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils learn about Greek tragedies while designing and making masks.
- You prioritise the need for pupils to develop the 'language of learning'. Your focus on ensuring that pupils develop the vocabulary and conceptual understanding they need to articulate their learning supports them well. You begin this work when children start in the Nursery. It leads to pupils understanding the potential benefits of them making mistakes so that they can learn something new.
- As a result of this emphasis on learning, pupils throughout the school begin to develop early thoughts as to their future employment. They are able to explain

why they aspire to these future roles and to give examples of what they have learned in school which has inspired them.

- You have a clear process for developing individual subjects. Once the training has taken place, leaders visit lessons to check that it is having the intended impact on the quality of teaching and on pupils' outcomes. Leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning then inform subsequent action planning. You and your team have developed the curriculum, for example by using digital technology, to bring aspects of it to life. For example, teachers use digital visualisation devices to allow pupils to experience three dimensional images of landscapes and environments which they are unlikely to experience first-hand. This has a positive impact on the depth of pupils' understanding of the topics they study. Their writing is more advanced as a result. This was exemplified by a Year 6 pupil's highly effective and moving piece about a polar bear, which begins by setting the scene: 'The sun shone down upon the still and silent arctic.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent development work to enable pupils to deepen their learning across the curriculum is embedded.

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

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

This inspection took place during the week of the key stage 2 national tests. Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, phase leaders and subject leaders. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. You and I made short visits to most classes to observe teaching and learning. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised a sample of pupils' workbooks and met with a group of pupils from Years 1 to 6, who shared and discussed their work in subjects across the curriculum. I reviewed the responses to the pupil, staff and parent questionnaires, including the free-text contributions to Parent View. During the inspection, I considered letters from two parents who explained their views about the school. I reviewed a range of documentation, including your school improvement planning, your own evaluation of the school's work and documents related to safeguarding.