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Miss Georgina Nutton
Headteacher
Preston Park Primary School
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Dear Miss Nutton

Short inspection of Preston Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2018 with Ann Pratt, Ofsted Inspector, 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 February 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 are clearly ambitious for the school and are leading it with energy and vision. Together with a hard-working leadership team and staff, you have made significant changes at the school to improve the quality of education and raise pupils' achievement. The energy you have brought to the school has strengthened capacity in your drive to become recognised as an outstanding school.

You have an accurate understanding of what the school does well, and where the school needs to improve. Governors are knowledgeable and are routinely involved in the work of the school, offering you strong strategic support. Senior and subject leaders are effective, as shown by the good support they provide for staff. This has led to pupils making strong progress in mathematics and writing so that, from low starting points, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Currently, the school is correctly focused on improving the progress pupils make in reading.

Leaders have made significant improvements to the school since the previous inspection. There have been notable improvements in teaching. For example, teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to make their work better, so improving pupils' progress.

Leaders have fostered a caring, inclusive school where staff know pupils well. The pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and have great confidence that the staff work hard to support their education and well-being. Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes towards the school.

Most parents and carers appreciate the work that the school does to keep them well informed about pupils' progress. Several commented that their children really want to come to school each day. Because of this, the pupils' attendance is strong.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leadership team and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are complete. All checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in place. Clear systems exist for staff to make referrals when concerns arise, and subsequent actions are followed up effectively. Leaders work well with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive well-targeted support when required. Staff training, including that related to the 'Prevent' duty, is up to date. Staff have a good knowledge of potential concerns within the local area. This increases their vigilance in spotting and reporting concerns about pupils' well-being.

The school has a friendly atmosphere, and the pupils appreciate this. We observed and chatted with pupils, including during lunchtime, and they were relaxed and happy. They told me that they feel very safe in school, and that bullying simply does not exist at the school.

Inspection findings

- For the first line of enquiry, we agreed to look at key stage 2 pupils' progress in reading. In 2017, Year 6 pupils' progress was average in reading overall, but below that in writing and mathematics; and the progress of disadvantaged pupils was well below that of other pupils nationally. You have rightly identified this as a priority.
- The school has taken several important steps to improve reading. Teachers have received additional training and support from externally sourced providers, as well as in school. This has given them greater confidence in teaching reading in interesting ways that help pupils in key stage 2 to develop their understanding of more diverse and demanding texts. There has been a particular focus on teaching the skills of comprehension. Additional support is provided for the school's disadvantaged pupils, where they need it. The school has also sought ways to encourage pupils to read more and to reflect more deeply on the quality and frequency of their reading.
- Though indications are promising, these initiatives are new and have not had time to make a significant impact upon pupils' progress and attainment. Reading rightly remains a priority area for the school.
- The second line of enquiry was to look at current pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 1. This was to test out the school's view that pupils are making good progress from their starting points, even though attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work. They know the pupils well and this means that they can challenge them effectively and match work accurately

to their needs. Pupils respond diligently, enjoy their learning and work hard. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Teachers model accurate spoken English in all subjects to help with rapid language acquisition. For example, strong emphasis was given to the development of vocabulary in a mathematics lesson.

- The school's assessment information and scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils are making good progress. Staff are providing appropriate challenge for most-able pupils to help them reach the standards of which they are capable. Suitable support is given to disadvantaged pupils to remove barriers to learning. Overall, staff are working very effectively in this key stage and, consequently, standards are now rising.
- Finally, we focused on how well pupils get off to a good start in learning to read using phonics. Leaders have given due priority to the teaching of phonics and have given staff useful guidance to sharpen their practice. Governors monitor this work carefully and have been able to see at first hand these improvements which you have made.
- In lessons, teachers are aware of the need to plan work that builds systematically on what pupils can already do, from Nursery onwards. This is done through the successful teaching of pupils in smaller groups, making judicious use of time and resources. Teachers also make very good use of additional adults to work with pupils.
- As a result of the actions taken, the school's assessment information suggests that current Year 1 pupils are on track towards significant improvement on previous years' results in the national phonics screening check. Leaders acknowledge that more can be done to improve the progress of the most able pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the focus on reading is sustained through careful evaluation of the effectiveness of the initiatives the school has taken
- improvements in the teaching of phonics are sustained, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of the most able 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 Brent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim McLoughlin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, we held several meetings with you and the two deputy headteachers. We met with four governors and held a conversation with a representative from the local authority. We held informal discussions with parents at the entrance to the playground and considered the three responses to Ofsted's online free-text facility. The deputy headteachers accompanied us on visits to classrooms. We talked to pupils about their learning. We looked at pupils' books and listened to a range of pupils read as they worked in lessons. We also looked at the 71 responses to staff surveys. We also evaluated a range of school documentation, including school development plans, safeguarding records and information about current pupils' achievement.