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James Simmons
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Simmons

Short inspection of Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 May 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Following your appointment in April 2015 and the subsequent appointment of your very able deputy, together, you have embarked on a journey of school development, which is well under way. Governors, leaders, staff, parents, carers and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and this creates a calm, purposeful learning environment. There is an ethos of mutual trust, which permeates the school. You, your senior leaders and governors have a very clear vision for the school. You are moving together, as a community, in incremental steps, building a firm foundation for sustainable improvement. You all know that the school is not yet outstanding but are determined that in time it will be.

You have worked hard to improve the learning environment and are committed to making learning fun as well as rigorous. You hold 'learning adventures' termly, which are popular with parents, staff and pupils. Your school's 80th birthday celebrations were a topic of enthusiastic conversation with pupils who are benefiting from meeting with former teachers. This is bringing history to life for them. Your school does well academically and was above national averages for the past two years, until 2017, when reading in the national key stage 2 test dipped. There was also a greater difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally, in all areas of the curriculum, which had not been the case for the previous two years. I focused mainly on these two areas for my inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, together with your leadership team and governors, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Robust systems and processes are in place and, as a result, all staff know how to report any safeguarding concerns. The designated safeguarding leads are fully trained, so prompt and appropriate action can be taken should a concern arise. As a team, you follow up any issues carefully and swiftly, working well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders complete the required checks to ensure that all staff are suitable to work in the school. These checks are recorded on the single central record, which is updated and checked regularly by leaders and governors.

You make sure that staff have received regular and appropriate safeguarding training that supports their understanding of the current statutory guidance. You remind staff frequently about their duties in safeguarding pupils. There is a rolling programme of staff training in place, so all staff are kept fully aware of current issues, such as keeping children safe online and the risks of radicalisation.

Staff spoke to me of a 'culture of vigilance' to keep pupils safe. Pupils and parents with whom I spoke said that the school is a very safe place. The school council and Oliver's allies and anti-bullying ambassadors are all integral to this ethos. They take their responsibilities seriously and are fully respected in the playground by other pupils.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry we agreed to look at was the action leaders had taken to address the difference in progress and attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils nationally that occurred in the end of key stage 2 tests in 2017. There are higher numbers of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2, so I looked at a range of books from these year groups to check progress. I also looked at current performance information for these pupils.
- The books I saw in all subjects indicate that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress, and some are making exceptional progress. Leaders are tracking these pupils closely and ensuring that teachers are providing them with the opportunities they need to achieve their best.
- Governors scrutinise pupil premium spending. They were surprised by the differences at the end of last year and have been careful this year to monitor more closely both the spend and its impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Performance information for this year indicates that of the 43 pupils on roll, almost all are on track to achieve their targets. Those pupils not on track are achieving age-related expectations, but are a focus for the leadership team as they are higher-attaining pupils. They will be targeted to ensure that they make the required progress to achieve at greater depth in the next academic year.
- The next line of enquiry was to find out what action the leadership has taken to improve reading progress and attainment since the dip in end of key stage 2 test results in 2017.

- Systematic phonics teaching is in place across Reception and Year 1. Pupils who did not meet the standard in Year 1 have been targeted in Year 2. It is only pupils who are either new to English or new to the school who have not met the standard this year. The pupils who still did not achieve the standard in Year 2 last year have achieved the standard in Year 3. You and I looked at phonics sessions across Reception, where teaching is strong, and every child was working at an appropriate level. However, in Year 1 the teaching of phonics is less effective as some children are not being moved on fast enough. This is being addressed by leaders, but there is further work to be done.
- Well-organised guided reading activities take place across the school from 9.00 am to 9.30 am three times a week and then other reading activities, such as whole-class reading, and comprehension activities take place on the remaining days. Teachers are focused on developing comprehension skills and the understanding of inference. Books are selected appropriately, and pupils work both with a teacher and independently in these sessions. The deputy headteacher has coached and mentored teachers in how to teach guided reading more effectively. Leaders have invested in new guided reading resources and a new library, which is used by all the pupils, particularly reluctant readers. As a result, there is a much deeper focus on reading. Home reading has been a focus with parents, and many more pupils are now taking reading books home. There is already evidence this year that progress has improved considerably. There is an increase in pupils on track to reach both age-related and higher standards in each year group, and a significant improvement in reading is expected in the 2018 end of key stage 2 tests.
- My next line of enquiry was an area for development in the previous inspection. This was to check whether teachers and middle leaders are now using performance and tracking information more effectively to ensure that pupils achieve their very best.
- You have put in place training for all middle leaders through the local teaching alliance and through in-school coaching and development from the leadership team. The science leader, following the disappointing assessments in science in 2017, scrutinised the results to see where the gaps were. You identified enquiry, investigation and practical science as areas for development. This has improved pupils interest in science as well as the quality of work in science in books. You have restructured the leadership roles recently and now have a structure and team that are fit for purpose. Although the English and mathematics leaders are new to their roles, they have a clear understanding of the work they will undertake in monitoring groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, and scrutinising work in their subjects to maximise progress and achievement. It is too early to judge the impact of their work.
- Although attendance at your school was well above national averages, I was concerned about the rise in persistent absence in 2017. Records indicate that persistent absence in 2017 was due to 11 pupils who have complex medical needs and/or safeguarding issues. All these pupils were very well monitored and followed through by the assistant headteacher or deputy headteacher and the education welfare officer. This year shows a significant reduction in persistent absence, but the school still has a very small number of pupils whose attendance

falls below national averages, for similar reasons as last year. Overall attendance is above national averages.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the reading culture, which will support pupils to deepen and extend their reading skills across the curriculum, is developed further
- middle leaders are developed further to be able to fulfil their responsibility and accountability for monitoring pupils' progress across the school in their subjects.

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

Susan Ladipo
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you and your deputy headteacher as well as three members of the governing body to discuss the school's evaluation of itself as well as the actions leaders have taken to maintain and improve the good quality of education. I visited all classrooms, together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. I observed and talked to pupils as they were learning. I met with the deputy headteacher responsible for pupil premium funding. I also looked, with leaders, at examples of pupils' work and assessment information to evaluate their outcomes over time.

I reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation and the single central record of vetting checks on staff. I met with six pupils and four middle leaders. I scrutinised a range of documents including minutes of governing body meetings, local authority reports and school council information. I considered the views of parents through the 36 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View. Sixty-five responses were received from children and 36 responses were received from staff to Ofsted's surveys. All were overwhelmingly positive.