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Mrs Margaret Nowak
Headteacher
Cardinal Road Infant and Nursery School
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Dear Mrs Nowak

Short inspection of Cardinal Road Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 5 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 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 be a section 5 inspection.

Cardinal Road is a happy, supportive and highly inclusive school, which fully embraces and celebrates the diversity of the community it serves. You are highly aspirational for your pupils and they thrive in all aspects of school life. Their enthusiasm for learning is palpable and their behaviour exemplary. Staff and pupils have taken to heart the school's aims and values and do indeed 'aim high' and 'work hard'. Relationships are warm. Pupils are kind to, and respectful of, one another. They are eager to explore, are positive and unafraid of taking risks with their learning. As one pupil commented, 'Mistakes make you clever.' Standards are high and pupils are eager to talk about their work. Parents and carers are rightly appreciative of the high-quality teaching and care their children receive.

You have built a highly effective team of senior and middle leaders. They share a very accurate understanding of the school's many strengths and the areas that can improve further. Together, you have taken decisive action to address the areas for improvement identified in your previous inspection report. You have led a relentless drive to ensure that every opportunity is taken to move pupils on in their learning as soon as they are ready. You have also worked very hard to reduce the levels of pupils' absence and, in particular, persistent absence. Nevertheless, you recognise

that there is more to be done.

Governors are ambitious and share your aspirations for pupils' outcomes. Their strategic decision-making supports you well in your efforts to ensure that the school goes from strength to strength.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including governors, have successfully created and embedded a culture where keeping pupils safe is of the highest priority. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and fit for purpose. Governor and staff training is comprehensive and up to date. Staff know what to do if they have concerns regarding a pupil or colleague. Pupils are taught, and understand, how to keep themselves safe, including online. One school councillor earnestly advised me to: 'Never believe things on the internet because people might just be pretending. You don't tell people your name or your school.' Pupils know whom to speak to in school if they are worried or if someone is unkind to them. Staff meticulously record and monitor all concerns. Staff work closely with outside agencies and, where there are serious concerns about a pupil, they make timely referrals. You have introduced effective new systems that have further improved the security of the school site.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to look at how effectively all pupils are being challenged and supported, so that they achieve their potential. We also agreed to consider how effective leaders' actions have been in diminishing differences in attainment between pupil groups. This was because, in the 2016 and 2017 key stage 1 assessments, pupils who spoke English as their first language attained less well than their peers. Similarly, the proportion of boys attaining greater depth in reading and writing was less than that of girls.
- Extensive and well-targeted training, for both teachers and teaching assistants, has improved the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils are making even better progress. Early years and key stage 1 teachers work together closely in subject teams. This gives them the opportunity to learn from each other's experience and expertise. Leaders have established a whole-school expectation that all pupils must have the opportunity to deepen their learning in every lesson. Teachers make the most of every opportunity to stretch pupils' thinking and make them think hard about their learning. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers are alert to when their pupils are ready for more challenging work and move them on quickly. As a result, pupils make substantial and sustained progress over time.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced a comprehensive literacy programme into Reception and Year 1. This approach has been successful in helping staff plan activities that challenge pupils to excel. Pupils read with enthusiasm and with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. They are given frequent opportunities to write in different genres and at length across the curriculum. Pupils take enormous pride in their written work and the standard of presentation in their books is extremely high. They are very eager to show

their work and talk about what they are learning.

- Teachers know their pupils very well. They use assessment information effectively to identify when pupils' progress is not as strong as they would like. Teachers also use the expertise of specialists within the school's attached speech and language unit to help them quickly identify barriers to pupils' progress. This enables them to put in place extra help at the earliest possible stage. Earlier this year, for example, Year 2 teachers identified that White British boys were underperforming. They took swift action, setting up intervention groups and changing the Year 2 curriculum so that it more closely matched boys' interests. As a result, the vast majority of boys are attaining or exceeding the age-expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have completed a great deal of work and given much thought into designing the school's curriculum to ensure that it is meaningful and inspirational for pupils. Wherever possible, teachers link learning to pupils' real-life experiences. In Reception, where 70% of the current cohort are boys, the children were engaged enthusiastically with the wide range of opportunities for 'hands-on' learning. Importantly, pupils know and can explain the reasons for what they are learning. For example, a Year 1 pupil told me that she needed to learn about fractions so that she could share a pizza equally with her friends.
- As a result of the above, and other initiatives, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is very strong and continues to improve. Current assessment information indicates that gaps between different groups of pupils have greatly diminished by the end of key stage 1 and, in some cases, closed entirely. Learning is fun at Cardinal Road and pupils develop very positive attitudes to both life and learning. Their good progress is underpinned by the emphasis leaders place on developing key knowledge and skills in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics. This means that they are very well prepared for their transition to junior school.
- We also agreed to consider how effective leaders' actions have been in reducing high levels of absence and persistent absence. Leaders and governors have rightly identified attendance as a key issue, with both absence and persistence absence being above national figures for at least the past three years.
- Leaders and staff leave no stone unturned in their work to promote high levels of attendance. The school's pastoral team has worked tirelessly to build strong relationships with vulnerable families. They monitor attendance on a daily basis and pursue non-attendance with grit and determination. Working with school leaders, they identify barriers to good attendance and are very proactive in working with families to seek possible solutions. You and your team have introduced a number of successful initiatives to persuade pupils and their parents of the importance of good attendance. For example, each week the class with the best attendance is awarded the school's 'attendance bear'. Every half-term the headteacher holds an attendance assembly, in which pupils with 100% attendance are rewarded with an increasing scale of certificates, wristbands and other prizes.
- As a result of leaders' actions, attendance is rising, particularly in key stage 1. However, leaders are determined to build on these improvements so attendance

overall is at least in line with national figures. Children in the Nursery account for a high proportion of persistent absentees. Leaders are therefore rightly prioritising promoting good habits of attendance as soon as children join the school in the Nursery.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to take every opportunity to reduce absence and, in particular, persistent absence, so that it is in line with national averages.

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

Yours sincerely

Jan Keating
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to agree the areas of focus for the inspection. Accompanied by senior leaders, I visited every class within the school, including the Nursery and the speech and language unit. In each class, I spoke with pupils and looked at a range of work in their books. I listened to three Reception and two Year 1 pupils read.

I held meetings with members of the governing body, the school council and with middle leaders. I also met with you and the attendance officer. I spoke on the telephone to a representative of the local authority and to the headteacher of a local alternative provision.

I considered a range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, written records of governing body meetings, attendance information, current progress and attainment information, and the single central record of pre-employment checks.

I also took account of the views of four pupils, 23 parents and 14 staff who completed the relevant Ofsted online surveys. In addition, I considered the 82 responses from the school's own parental questionnaire carried out in February 2018.