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Ms Ann O'Reilly
Headteacher
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Dear Ms O'Reilly

Short inspection of Redlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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 September 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, along with senior leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to developing the role of all leaders in the school.

Pupils are making strong progress in phonics, mathematics and writing. Currently, the school is focused on improving pupils' reading and comprehension skills in key stage 2.

Your curriculum is well established and gives pupils the chance to study a wide range of subjects in depth. For example, pupils told me how much they enjoyed the work that they do in the art studio and the cookery room.

You have worked hard to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Assessment and pupil progress systems are now in place for all subjects. You have employed a wide range of approaches to develop pupils' speaking skills, including drama and debating. However, you recognise that further work needs to be done in this area.

Governors offer a good balance of challenge and support. They play a full role in ensuring that the school has a strong safeguarding culture. Governors are regular visitors to classrooms, and are ambitious for the future of the school.

Pupils, parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Parents told me that they are impressed with the creative learning that goes on in the school. Pupils said that they feel safe and are rightly proud of their school. Pupils are provided with many

opportunities to be of service in the school and to help others. Pupils' behaviour and the promotion of their welfare are strengths of the school. Pupils are eager to learn and they work well together.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. The leadership team has ensured that records are detailed and of high quality. The governing body regularly checks the records maintained by the school and poses questions to leaders responsible for safeguarding. School leaders have set up a pupil review group, which meets regularly to review any concerns that staff may have for vulnerable pupils. Records show that swift action is taken to protect children, should the need arise. Leaders know families and individual pupils well. They provide advice and guidance for parents to help them keep their children safe, for example when online. Leaders, working with external agencies, have organised a range of helpful workshops to support parents. This includes offering counselling and advocacy services, where appropriate.

Pupils said that they feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe because of the strong pastoral care. Pupils described the school as being a caring school. Staff deal with any incidents of derogatory language or bullying towards pupils quickly. Pupils were clear about knowing to whom they should report concerns. Parents I spoke to agreed that their children felt happy and safe in school.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we agreed three key lines of enquiry. The first of these focused on the provision for children in reading and writing in the early years. For the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was below the national average.
- From lower starting points than are typical for their age, children make strong progress in their early reading and writing skills so that, by the end of the Reception Year, standards of reading and writing are at or above the national average. Speaking and communication and language skills still need further development.
- The indoor and outdoor provision is bright and attractive. Children's physical development is well provided for outdoors. There are plentiful opportunities for writing and mark making in all of the early years. Pupils leave the early years with clear letter formation and a grasp of basic punctuation.
- The teaching of phonics is systematic, starting in the Nursery Year. Teachers are precise in their use of letters and sounds.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been consistently above the national expectation for the last three years. By the end of key stage 1, standards of reading are at or above the national average.
- For our second key line of enquiry, we agreed to focus on what leaders are doing to improve pupils' reading and oracy skills in key stage 2. Attainment and progress in reading were not as strong in key stage 2 in 2017 as in mathematics and writing. You identified this as a priority for improvement.

- I heard a range of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read. They read fluently, and texts were appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils were less able to discuss why they enjoyed the book that they were reading, and they needed encouragement to read with expression.
- At the start of this academic year, the school changed how you approach guided reading in Year 6. All pupils now use the same text, and you have emphasised the development of comprehension skills and analysis of text as key skills to develop. Teachers select texts that they know challenge the pupils. During the inspection, pupils were engaged in their reading tasks, but they were less able to explain why they had selected specific vocabulary in their writing tasks.
- You identify the development of oracy as crucial to the improvement of pupils' vocabulary and reading skills. This is key to speaking fluently and grammatically correctly.
- You are ambitious to extend pupils' speaking skills and, therefore, provide a wide range of opportunities designed to promote speaking. For example, in Year 6 the pupils were discussing new beginnings in life. Teachers posed challenging questions but, in many cases, pupils did not speak loudly enough and lacked confidence. You recognise that more work needs to be done to promote their speaking skills.
- Finally, we explored how successfully pupils achieve across the curriculum. Your commitment to a wider and more creative curriculum encourages pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across a wide range of subject areas.
- Creativity is promoted through technology, art and design, and the humanities. The curriculum is carefully planned to provide challenge across a wide range of subjects. We looked at half-termly topic books, where pupils had opportunities to write and investigate topics in history, geography and science. These books are very well maintained and pupils take obvious pride and care in their presentation. Assessment systems are thorough, and pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have learned.
- Outcomes from the creative curriculum are most evident in the art studio. High-quality displays of pupils' work were seen in sculptures, paintings and collage work. We saw Year 2 in the art studio engaged in printing. Pupils learn to critique their own artwork from Year 1 onwards, and they keep a learning journal tracking their progression of skills in art and design through the school. In the cookery room, we saw Year 2 pupils learning life skills around preparing food and healthy eating. Parents are appreciative of these opportunities provided, and one parent told me, 'now my boys come home and want to cook'.
- Pupils have the opportunity to learn Spanish and to learn about different faiths. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through their understanding of other faiths. The religious education curriculum encourages pupil to explore the arts, traditions and history of other faiths. You also highlight the wide range of opportunities the school provides for cultural trips and residential visits around London and the local area, which helps build pupils' understanding of the world around them.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop pupils' oracy skills further so that pupils are able to speak confidently and correctly
- rates of attainment and progress in reading continue to rise in key stage 2 so that pupils can discuss their enjoyment of books and read with expression.

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

Yours sincerely

Sean Flood
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held discussions with you and other senior and middle leaders. I spoke with a representative from the local authority and held a meeting with the vice-chair of governors. I spoke with pupils in class, in structured settings and informally. I also spoke to parents. I observed pupils' behaviour in class, in the playgrounds and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised pupils' work in a wide range of subjects. I heard readers across the school and spoke with pupils about the books that they are reading. I also visited the Nursery. I made visits to all classes alongside senior leaders. I examined the school's progress tracking information and assessment records. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation related to safeguarding, welfare and attendance. I looked at behaviour and bullying incident logs. I considered the responses of four parents to Parent View, and the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.