

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



20 July 2018

Mrs Susan Robertson
Headteacher
Unicorn Primary School
Creswell Drive
Beckenham
Kent
BR3 3AL

Dear Mrs Robertson

Short inspection of Unicorn Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in July 2013.

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.

You and your governors have overseen the school's rapid growth from its initial opening with only a few children, to a large, successful school in which pupils thrive. During this time, your firm leadership and clear vision for the school have enabled it to flourish. The many positive views of parents, shared by free text during the inspection, are summed up by one who commented, 'Everyone takes their lead from the headteacher, who leads by example in her professionalism and her welcome to each and every child at Unicorn'.

Pupils are provided with a rich, stimulating environment in which to learn. Good-quality facilities and resources, and excellent school grounds, are maximised to provide pupils with a high-quality curriculum. A wide range of school trips, events and club activities enrich pupils' lives and add significantly to their enjoyment of school.

For the past three years, attainment has remained consistently high. The proportions of pupils working beyond the expected standards in reading and writing, and in particular mathematics, have also remained high. This year, you have taken effective action to strengthen procedures to monitor how well all pupils are doing. You are now able to pinpoint which pupils need further support to enable them to achieve well.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is suitably prioritised and managed effectively. A detailed policy and robust procedures are in place to keep pupils safe from harm. The single central record of checks made when appointing adults to work with children is well maintained. Two senior leaders share responsibility for managing concerns raised by staff about pupils' safety and welfare. Safeguarding training for staff, including 'Prevent' duty, is up to date. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, a visit from the Breck Foundation helped pupils to understand the risks involved when online. This also prompted pupils to plan a series of events to raise money for this charity. Pupils told me that they really value the 'listening ear', provided by staff if they need to share their personal concerns with them in confidence.

Inspection findings

- To determine whether the school remained good, I followed four key lines of enquiry during the inspection. These were based on the school's recent performance information, and an analysis of the school's website. I focused on: the actions taken by leaders to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress; how effectively the pupil premium is spent to support disadvantaged pupils; the quality of the curriculum and its impact on pupils' achievement; and whether school is a safe, stimulating and enjoyable place to be. I also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding and child protection arrangements.
- Attainment is consistently high but in the past not all middle-ability pupils or the most able have made the progress expected of them. Pupils make consistently good progress in mathematics, which is a strength of the school. Until recently, they have made less progress in reading and writing. You have worked with your school improvement partner to rectify this. Systematic procedures have been introduced to monitor routinely how well each individual pupil is progressing. These procedures are enabling you and your staff to spot at an early stage those at risk of underachieving, and to take action to prevent it from happening. Your latest results in all key stages show that these procedures are working, and are leading to further improvement.
- Your own records show that all pupils are making the progress expected of them. Assessments made by teachers at the end of key stage 1, and the provisional results from this year's national tests at the end of key stage 2 confirm this. The proportions of pupils in Years 2 and 6 working at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. Significantly, the proportions of pupils exceeding the standards in these subjects are also very high.

- Our short visits to observe pupils at work in lessons and sample the work in their books confirmed that good teaching is leading to substantial and sustained progress. Pupils' literacy skills are developed well through regular opportunities to write at length and check their own appropriate use of punctuation and grammar. Teachers provide pupils with regular advice about their work, in accordance with the school's agreed marking policy. This promotes pupils' progress well. However, teachers are not required to correct all common spelling errors. Tasks are provided for all pupils to extend their learning and provide further challenge. These tasks are often the same for pupils of different abilities.
- Results show that early reading is taught well. By the end of Year 1, almost every pupil has passed the national test of their understanding of phonics. This good grounding is built upon further through key stages 1 and 2 through regular opportunities to read and use the library. Some older pupils who spoke with me feel that they would like more opportunities to read in lessons, and would like more challenging texts. In mathematics, pupils say that they are 'really pushed hard', and feel that they are making good progress. This is shown in information about the school's performance which confirms that progress is good and standards are very high.
- Only a few pupils are disadvantaged. The pupil premium is used effectively to support their learning and welfare and enable them to make good progress. Funding additional staff in Year 6 enables you to teach pupils in three, rather than two, classes. This ensures that pupils in need of support gain from regular, one-to-one support from teachers to help them learn. You have also purchased new resources to record and analyse assessment information, and train staff in how to use them. This enables your leaders to check routinely how well disadvantaged pupils are progressing. Funding is also used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils participate in all enrichment activities and engage fully in school life.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Sufficient time is allocated to core subjects. This is complemented by a wide range of other subjects, including two modern languages, art and design, and two hours of physical education each week. Forest schools, taught in woodland in the school grounds, provide pupils of all ages with good opportunities to learn and play outdoors. The quality of pupils' work displayed around the school, including their writing, painting and drawing and splendid modelling in the style of Giacometti, shows the high standards pupils have produced.
- Learning in lessons is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities during and after school. Competitive sport is high profile. Some parents feel that singing and music remain underdeveloped. Regular trips and visits, including a residential experience, are very popular with pupils. During the inspection, a group of younger pupils were out of school visiting the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. These visits are used well to inspire and motivate pupils to write about their experiences. We observed a good example of this in a Year 2 class, where pupils built on their memories of a recent trip to the seaside to develop their creative writing.

- When asked, pupils told me that school is a safe, stimulating and enjoyable place to be. This is reflected in their regular attendance. Rigorous procedures are in place to monitor absence. Pupils' behaviour is good. No pupils are excluded from school. Pupils enthused about the rewards available for filling the 'golden ball jar'. They are polite and well mannered. This is because staff set high expectations of pupils, and take every opportunity to remind them of how to conduct themselves. They engage regularly in fundraising for charities of their choice. Pupils take pride in volunteering, from representing the views of others in the Pupil Parliament, to cleaning out the pet rabbits.
- The school's friendly, caring ethos ensures that pupils are happy, and are kept safe. The vast majority of pupils who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire during the inspection said they feel safe and enjoy learning at school. The school's inclusive ethos is summed up by one parent who commented that, 'Unicorn Primary is a lovely school that manages to create a community feel and encourages parents and carers to get involved.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- procedures introduced this year to monitor routinely how well each individual pupil is progressing become fully established
- tasks given to pupils to extend their learning provide them with sufficient challenge suited to their different abilities.

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

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your team of senior and middle leaders, and four members of the governing body. I also met with members of the Pupil Parliament. We walked the school to observe pupils at work in lessons, and to sample the work in their books. I reviewed a range of documentation including self-evaluation and school improvement planning, safeguarding policy and procedures including the single central record, and information relating to the spending of the pupil premium. I considered 79 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and three letters from parents. I also considered 43 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff, and 130 responses from pupils.