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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Samuel Nowak
Headteacher
Fryent Primary School
Church Lane
Kingsbury
London
NW9 8JD

Dear Mr Nowak

Short inspection of Fryent Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 2018 with Sarah Jones, 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 March 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement, which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

This school continues to be good.

You joined the school as headteacher in September 2016 and have faced many challenges, particularly around staffing. In 2015, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 was strong, particularly in writing. However, in 2016 and 2017, pupils' reading and writing progress declined. In 2016, less than half of Year 6 pupils attained at least the national expectations in reading. Although this improved in 2017, attainment in reading remained well below the national average. You recognise that, in the past, the assessment of children's progress at the end of Reception was not accurate. Consequently, a large proportion of children left the early years with skills well below those of other children nationally.

Your leadership has been a stabilising factor for the school. You have tackled underperformance and have an accurate understanding of how the school can further improve. You have raised staff morale and improved staff recruitment. Members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey, and those who spoke to inspectors, told us that they are proud to work at Fryent Primary School. Parents share positive views about the school and feel that their children are well cared for and safe. This was evident in pupils' good behaviour seen during the inspection. Pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics is a strength of the school. Effective

leadership in the early years ensures that pupils receive strong provision.

However, there is still a legacy of underperformance. The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. Adults do not routinely challenge pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. In particular, pupils in Year 3 do not receive consistently strong teaching. Given that current Year 3 pupils attained below the national average in 2017, at the end of key stage 1 weaker teaching and low attainment continue to hinder these pupils' potential success. Support for pupils new to the English language is limited, particularly in key stage 2. Adults do not routinely provide these pupils with opportunities to develop their spoken language or early reading skills.

Although leaders have prioritised improvements in the teaching of reading and writing, these remain variable. For example, staff's accuracy in assessing pupils' writing is variable and, in some classes, inaccurate. On occasion, leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and learning are over generous. Governors know the school's priorities and follow up with regular visits to gain a better understanding of these. For example, governors visit the school weekly to sit with pupils and support them in their reading. However, governors do not demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the information provided to them by senior leaders and link governors.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks meet statutory guidance. Staff receive regular training and have a thorough understanding of safeguarding procedures.

Leaders ensure that record-keeping is detailed and well organised. They have a good understanding of vulnerable pupils, and use external agencies well when required. The school's values, including the 'right to be safe' are understood well by pupils. Workshops led by the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children and by the local police develop pupils' understanding of safety. Pupils feel safe in school and trust adults. Pupils are confident to share any concerns that they have.

Inspection findings

- We agreed first to check leaders' effectiveness in improving pupils' reading. We identified this because in 2016 and 2017 Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading was below the national average. Progress was significantly below average in 2016. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check fell considerably in 2017 to just below the national average. Leaders identify improving the teaching of reading as one of their school priorities.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Leaders have an accurate understanding of pupils' abilities, and provide effective additional support to pupils who require it. Provisional assessment information indicates that the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is likely to

rise this year to be at least in line with the national average.

- Leaders have focused on giving pupils opportunities to read a variety of high-quality texts in their reading lessons. For example, Year 5 pupils spoke confidently after reading the book 'Oranges in No Man's Land'. Pupils told inspectors this helped them to understand how differences in some countries could lead to war and have a negative effect on children. Pupils related their learning to the importance for people of different backgrounds to get along.
- However, the quality of teaching and learning in reading is inconsistent. In key stage 1 reading lessons, pupils do not routinely read books matched to their abilities. This limits their fluency. Although pupils carry out tasks to understand unfamiliar vocabulary, these are too simplistic. As a result, pupils' deeper understanding of the wide range of vocabulary that they read is limited. Furthermore, the most able pupils do not receive consistently challenging reading comprehension work. In these lessons, pupils' engagement during their reading lessons is variable.
- We next looked at the effectiveness of leaders' work to develop pupils' writing. We chose this as an area of focus because of the decline of Year 6 pupils' progress in writing since the previous inspection.
- In some classes, pupils receive strong extended writing opportunities. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote expansive descriptive pieces linked to their reading book. When pupils are taught well, they learn to use a range of vocabulary and write fluently.
- However, the quality of teaching and learning in writing is variable across the school. The standard of pupils' writing in topic lessons is well below that in their writing lessons. Sometimes, teachers do not demonstrate high standards in their own handwriting. Consequently, pupils' handwriting in many books seen was variable and pupils lacked pride. Although leaders have worked with other schools to check the accuracy of teachers' writing assessment information, discrepancies remain. Teachers do not precisely correct lower ability pupils' grammatical mistakes in their written work, which hinders their progress. As a result, the proportion of pupils working at least towards the national standards in writing is not as high as it should be.
- The final area of focus was to look at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that children in the early years receive strong provision. I chose this area because, since the previous inspection, the proportion of children leaving early years with a good level of development has dropped significantly.
- Leadership of the early years is highly effective and there is a clear vision for success, so that previous inconsistencies are being tackled. Children make strong progress, particularly in their reading and writing. They successfully apply their phonics understanding to their writing, and are highly motivated to practise previously learned sounds. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate challenge and support. As a result, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is likely to be at least similar to the national average this year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning in reading continues to improve so that pupils make good progress from their starting points by ensuring that:
 - the proportion of pupils working at age-related expectations, particularly in key stages 1 and 2, is similar to the national average
 - pupils in key stage 1 have regular opportunities to develop their fluency and expression when reading
 - pupils in key stage 1 read books that match their abilities
 - the most able pupils are challenged with work that develops their reading comprehension
 - adults develop effectively pupils' deeper understanding of unfamiliar words
- the quality of teaching and learning in writing improves so that pupils make sustained progress from their starting points by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in topic lessons are consistently high in all subjects
 - teachers' own handwriting is consistently of a high standard
 - teachers clarify misconceptions in lower ability pupils' writing
 - teachers' accuracy in assessing pupils' writing is consistently accurate
- pupils who are new to the English language receive effective support to develop their speaking, listening and early reading skills
- governors develop a deeper understanding of the information provided to them by the leadership team and link governors.

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

Noeman Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we visited classrooms and scrutinised pupils' books, accompanied by senior leaders. We reviewed the school's documentation, including the school's safeguarding and assessment information. We met with senior leaders and governors. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a local authority adviser and representative for Brent Schools Partnership. We gathered the views of pupils in lessons and in the playground. Finally, we considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 74 responses from parents, 51 pupil responses and 32 responses from staff members.