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Mr Simon Abeledo
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Abeledo

Short inspection of Rush Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 November 2018, accompanied by Gulcan Asdoyuran, 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

Your detailed self-evaluation summary document is evaluative and provides some helpful examples to demonstrate how you feel the school has made gains since the previous inspection. While inspectors did not find sufficient evidence to support all of your judgements fully, they identified several examples of strong practice and a shared vision for the school. The self-evaluation processes tie in closely with your current school improvement plan, which identifies the right key priorities for 2018/2019. Leaders at all levels understand their roles in helping to bring this plan into fruition. Some leaders have taken on their roles more recently than others, and benefit from ongoing coaching and mentoring. You and your senior deputy headteacher use your experience and expertise well to support another primary school in a neighbouring local authority.

You and your senior leaders have maintained the high academic standards in the school. Pupils achieve very well in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they reach the end of key stage 2. Progress made by children in the early years and by pupils as they move through key stage 1 continues to be strong, and this is demonstrated in published achievement information and through the work in their books.

Parents and carers who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, express great satisfaction with the school. They are overwhelmingly positive about

many aspects and, at the time of writing this letter, 99% of those who responded would recommend the school to another parent. This is testament to leaders' hard work and commitment to ensuring that pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education. One satisfied parent wrote: 'Rush Green staff go above and beyond to help my child in any way they can.'

You actively encourage pupils to be polite and courteous, and they live up to this expectation. They speak with pride about their school and take advantage of the many opportunities to develop their talent and leadership skills, whether this be by serving as house captains, or being members of the active school council.

The quality of teaching and learning in the school continues to strengthen, and your procedures for assessing progress in reading, writing and mathematics are well established and secure. However, you identified weaknesses in your systems for assessing pupils' progress in the foundation subjects and have chosen to replace these with an alternative system, which currently is not in place. This makes it difficult for teachers to evaluate accurately pupils' progress in these subjects and they are not, therefore, able consistently to plan learning which provides a sufficient degree of challenge for pupils of all abilities.

Pupils respond very well to their teachers' high expectations for behaviour. This enables lessons to flow smoothly and uninterrupted. Teachers enjoy positive relationships with pupils, and use their strong subject knowledge to motivate pupils to achieve well.

Governors know the school well. Their 'governors' week', during which they spend time in school during the spring term, enables them to get to know the school's strengths and weaknesses in depth, and to test out the information you provide them through your headteacher's reports. They are a knowledgeable group of individuals who share your vision to make this school parents' first choice in the local community.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Pupils' well-being is paramount, and all staff in the school have undergone thorough training to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure. The school responds quickly to any emergency situations that may arise. All staff have received and read up-to-date documentation relating to safeguarding and child protection.

The checks carried out to make sure that staff are suitable to work with children are thorough, and are recorded appropriately on the school's single central record.

Our examination of documentation relating to pupils who are vulnerable or at risk shows that these records are securely stored, and include details of discussions, actions taken, involvement of external agencies and the resolutions achieved.

Inspection findings

- We looked initially at whether the strong progress made by pupils in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics was reflected across the other subjects (foundation subjects) taught in the school. Pupils clearly make strong progress in the early years from their below-average starting points, and this progress continues in key stage 1 and in key stage 2. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books for the foundation subjects shows that pupils are making progress, although this also raised the question of whether all pupils are sufficiently challenged in order to make their progress strong and sustained.
- While you have established reliable systems for measuring pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics, you were only looking at their attainment in the foundation subjects. You decided that this system was not working well, and that it was not helpful for teachers when they were planning for learning. Although you have plans in place to rectify this, you currently have no workable system to measure pupils' progress in the foundation subjects. This remains a key priority for the school.
- We also looked at how well the school meets the needs of the most able disadvantaged pupils. We considered this, as this group of pupils did not make as much progress at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 as disadvantaged pupils who had low and middle prior attainment. You presented us with some convincing case studies to explain why some of these pupils underachieved.
- When we met with a group of most-able disadvantaged pupils and looked at their books, we found evidence that better progress is now being made. These pupils spoke passionately about their learning, and they told us they felt they were being challenged by their teachers. Those pupils in Years 5 and 6 appreciate the fact that their teachers make constant reference to their learning, and have conversations with them about their learning.
- We looked at whether pupils' attendance has continued to improve over time and whether your actions to reduce persistent absenteeism continue to demonstrate impact. You have improved pupils' attendance so that it was broadly average in 2017. Current information shows attendance as being very slightly above last year's national average. You made great gains in reducing persistent absenteeism from 11.4% above the national average in 2016 to just below average in 2017. Your work to address persistent absenteeism continues, and you work well with parents of these pupils to encourage them to send their children to school more regularly.
- Finally, we considered whether pupils were well supervised during breaktimes and lunchtimes and whether they behaved well. We looked at this, as it was identified as an area for improvement in your previous section 5 inspection in 2014 and also in the section 8 inspection that took place in May 2017.
- In our meeting with some of your midday supervisors, they spoke positively about the good-quality training they had received and welcomed the introduction of zoned areas in the playgrounds. They told us that behaviour had improved. We also observed pupils behaving well in the playground. Better equipment has been provided for pupils to make use of, which pupils say they appreciate. The

school council also regularly feeds back to staff about the behaviour of their peers. Your actions to improve this aspect of the provision have made playtime an enjoyable and safe experience for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they establish a manageable and workable system to measure pupils' progress in the foundation subjects, so that teachers can plan for learning which provides a suitable degree of challenge for all pupils
- recently appointed leaders continue to be coached and mentored, in order to strengthen their leadership of the areas they oversee.

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

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and other senior leaders to discuss progress since the previous inspection. We met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and three other governors, as well as meeting with your school improvement partner. We also met with two groups of pupils and some midday supervisors.

We scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your self-evaluation summary document and the school's plans for improvement. We held a meeting to examine the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks that leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children and information relating to behaviour and attendance. We also heard four pupils read.

Together, we undertook observations of learning across the school. We viewed work in pupils' books and spoke with pupils about their learning when visiting lessons. We took account of the views of 90 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, as well as 23 free-text responses.