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Ms Jacqui Willer
Headteacher
Henwick Primary School
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Dear Ms Willer

Short inspection of Henwick Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 2019, 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Together with your senior leaders, you have ensured that standards continue to improve and that teaching is good. Staff are motivated and know exactly what the school is aiming to achieve. The school values – which include honesty, respect, diversity and resilience – are evident in the calm and purposeful ethos that you and your team create across the school.

Staff cater well for pupils' physical and emotional well-being. Pupils respect each other's opinions, and feel confident to answer questions in lessons. At lunchtimes, pupils participate together in well-organised sporting activities. Pupils said the best things about the school are the many learning activities they take part in, and the support they receive from staff and their classmates. They wear their 'stars of the week' for exemplary behaviour with pride. Pupils enjoy the many leadership opportunities provided throughout the school, from organising the animal club to promoting the use of different languages as language ambassadors.

Pupils say that the high level of respect for people from different backgrounds is one of the most positive characteristics of the school. New arrivals to the school told us of the warm welcome they received, which helped them settle quickly into school. Many parents and carers commented positively about the inclusive nature of the school and the fact that children are well cared for. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey – Parent View – said they would recommend the school to other parents.

Since the last inspection, the school has grown significantly in size. You have developed the building so that space is used well by the pupils. Classrooms and other learning spaces are bright and inviting. There are plentiful displays that celebrate the high quality of work that pupils complete.

You have tackled the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. In the staff survey, a significant majority of staff stated that leaders use professional development to encourage, challenge and support them. As a result, standards at the end of key stage 2 continue to rise, and the progress pupils make is strong. Leaders have engaged well with families to raise attendance. Although this has improved, a small number of persistently absent pupils continue to affect overall attendance.

Over time, pupils have thrived in the early years, and the dip in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2017 has been reversed. Activities in the early years are carefully designed to take children's learning forward in all areas, especially communication, language and literacy. As a result, children show a high level of engagement and sustain concentration because the activities they choose are designed well to meet their individual needs.

Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths and areas for development across the school because of frequent visits and regular meetings. They work effectively with school leaders to find solutions to issues. Governors are committed to – and supportive of – the school improvements that have taken place. They use their wealth of skills and expertise to hold leaders to account. They are keen to improve their role and influence through carefully written action plans.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team know your families well and have extensive knowledge of the issues facing the local community. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and safeguarding policies are appropriate and up to date. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

Staff monitor any pupils causing concern, and the school makes appropriate and timely referrals. Systems are thorough and well established. Checks made on staff and visitors are stringent. Record-keeping is careful and information is stored securely.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, and they feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe online as a result of the practical e-safety sessions they receive. Pupils enjoy their roles of responsibility across a range of year groups as 'e-cadets'. They pass on the training they receive, set challenges for other pupils and send updates about e-safety to parents. Pupils are knowledgeable about the different types of bullying. They say that bullying very rarely happens, and are confident about reporting any concerns to adults, knowing that they will be dealt with swiftly.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we established three lines of enquiry. We first agreed to explore what you and your leaders are doing to improve outcomes in phonics. The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check over the last three years has been below the national average.
- You have put in place a skilled leader for phonics and ensure that you have well-trained support staff. This enables the school to teach pupils in targeted groups focused on their needs. Leaders regularly analyse pupil performance data. Pupils are moved between groups to ensure that their learning needs are met. Leaders have thorough subject knowledge, and provided us with evidence to show how pupils now use their phonics skills more effectively in their writing.
- In most phonics lessons, pupils are engrossed in their learning. They use a range of resources to practise and apply their phonics knowledge. In some lessons, pupils are not engaged to the same level. This means that they are not able to consolidate their phonics skills as well. The strongest practice needs to be embedded across all sessions so that phonics outcomes improve.
- The second area I checked was reading in key stage 2, as pupils who attained highly in key stage 1 did not make as much progress as their peers in the 2018 key stage 2 national tests.
- The English teaching team is committed and skilled. Leaders undertook a thorough review of the teaching of reading across the school, and they know the pupils well. They completed a detailed analysis of pupils' weaknesses from tests pupils have completed. Leaders have used the information they gained to tackle gaps in understanding and to develop teaching and learning approaches to extend the achievement of most-able pupils.
- Scrutiny of these pupils' work in reading shows that they respond well to the challenges set. Pupils use evidence from the text to generate ambitious vocabulary, which they then apply in their comprehension answers.
- Current school information and evidence in pupils' books show that most-able pupils in reading make strong progress. Visits to lessons showed that pupils engage well with the texts that they read. Pupils communicate confidently about the books they are reading with their classmates and their teachers. Pupils said they enjoy opportunities to read regularly at home and at school. They told me with enthusiasm that texts make them think carefully, stimulate their curiosity to turn the page and make them want to understand storylines and conclusions.
- Our final line of enquiry related to attendance and persistent absence. Historic data shows that rates of absence and persistent absence are above national levels. You and your leaders know the pupils and their families well. Your team is able to provide support to get pupils into school more regularly. Effective monitoring of attendance which falls below the national average enables leaders to challenge families when necessary.
- Leaders support teachers to communicate regularly with all families where a child's attendance is low, providing support. This encourages the majority of pupils to attend school regularly. The range of campaigns and rewards to increase attendance that you

have put in place work for the majority of families. However, there remain a small number who have not yet responded sufficiently well. Improvement in attendance among this group has a direct impact on overall attendance. You are aware that you need to focus on this aspect of the school's work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- phonics screening check outcomes improve by sharing existing strong practice across the school
- the number of pupils who are persistently absent continues to decrease so that overall attendance improves.

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

Yours sincerely

Rebekah Iiyambo
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher, other leaders and staff. I spoke to three members of the governing body and met with a representative of the local authority.

I made 17 short visits to lessons with leaders, met with a group of pupils and listened to several pupils read. I observed pupils at lunchtime and spoke with staff.

I looked at samples of pupils' work and viewed a large range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, your school improvement plan, current data and documentation relating to safeguarding.

I spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day, and took account of the 83 free-text messages from parents, 108 responses to Parent View – Ofsted's online questionnaire – the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 83 responses to the pupil survey. I also considered your own surveys of the views of parents.