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Mrs Rachel Haig  
Headteacher  
Dorset Road Infant School  
Dorset Road  
Mottingham  
London  
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Dear Mrs Haig

### **Short inspection of Dorset Road Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2016.

### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your deputy headteachers lead Dorset Road Infant School and a nearby primary school. Both schools are part of The Spring Partnership Trust (the Trust). The Trust supports your leadership by helping you address the school's improvement priorities effectively. This ensures greater consistency in the quality of education at Dorset Road Infant School.

Leaders work hard to create a strong family ethos where all adults know pupils well. Parents comment very favourably on this approach. Senior leaders also support middle leaders well and help them to develop their roles effectively. Middle leaders speak positively of the professional development they receive and its impact on their work. Middle leaders find working with their partnership school particularly beneficial because it enables them to share ideas and moderate standards of pupils' work.

The local governing body works closely with school leaders and the Trust. Governors receive high-quality information from leaders. As a result, they know the school and its priorities well. Governors hold leaders to account robustly through their meetings, close analysis of information and visits to school. Members of the Trust also rigorously hold governors to account through regular meetings and scrutiny of documents.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure arrangements for safeguarding are effective. They provide high-quality and regular training so that all staff know how to identify concerns and support pupils to keep themselves safe. Staff also have a good understanding of the school's systems for reporting concerns.

The school's safeguarding leader works well with external agencies to ensure that any concerns are referred quickly and appropriately. Leaders' work with the Trust's leader for safeguarding supports this work. Leaders ensure that rigorous risk assessments are in place, for example to ensure that the arrangement for the school's use of the church hall next door is safe. Both the Trust and the local governing body monitor the school's safeguarding arrangements regularly. Governors attend regular training to improve their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils understand who they should speak to if they have a concern. They learn how to keep themselves safe through the school's personal, social, health and emotional curriculum alongside sessions focusing on e-safety. Pupils understand the importance of not sharing personal information online.

## **Inspection findings**

- I focused on four key lines of enquiry to check whether a good quality of education has been maintained. Firstly, I considered how strongly pupils make progress in their writing, particularly the most able pupils. This is because there has been a recent decline in outcomes for writing at the end of Year 2. Leaders have identified that the most able pupils are a group whose achievement in writing particularly needs to improve.
- Pupils are now making strong progress in writing, including the most able pupils. Teachers provide clear guidance for pupils in their planned writing tasks. Teachers' expectations take into account what pupils already know and where their gaps in learning are. Teachers challenge the most able pupils to use a more complex range of grammar and vocabulary.
- Within their literacy lessons, teachers provide pupils with a range of opportunities to write for different purposes. Pupils' writing is stimulated by the use of engaging texts, role play and drama. Leaders support pupils' choice of vocabulary when writing by introducing pupils to a broader and richer range of challenging reading texts. This has also developed pupils' enjoyment of reading. This is particularly evident for the most able pupils.
- Leaders' planning of provision in the early years ensures that children make a strong start in developing and practising their writing skills. For example, children take written orders in 'the outdoor café' and use puppets to support their written retelling of a traditional story.
- Leaders have prioritised developing opportunities for pupils to write across the wider curriculum. This work is having a good impact on writing outcomes for all pupils, including the most able.

- Secondly, I considered how well the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils are challenged to achieve highly in mathematics. There has been a decline in the number of pupils achieving the greater-depth standard at the end of Year 2. Leaders have identified achievement for this group as an area for improvement. While some disadvantaged pupils achieve the greater-depth standard in reading by the end of Year 2, fewer achieve this in mathematics.
- Teachers provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to secure their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. For example, pupils regularly use a range of practical resources to develop their understanding. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to support and challenge pupils. This ensures that pupils build a strong foundation in mathematical skills.
- Teachers model a wide range of mathematical vocabulary, which pupils then use, particularly the most able. Teachers help pupils to explain their thinking and discuss their ideas with each other. Teachers effectively challenge the most able pupils to provide reasons for their mathematical answers and to apply their skills to problem-solving.
- Teachers provide opportunities for middle-attaining pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to orally develop their higher-order reasoning skills. These pupils are now beginning to produce written recordings of their thinking.
- Thirdly, I considered how well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported in their learning to make good levels of progress in their writing. The school has a higher proportion of pupils with SEND than other schools nationally. For this group of pupils, attainment in writing is lower than for mathematics and reading. Leaders have prioritised improving progress in writing for pupils with SEND.
- Teachers ensure a strong culture of inclusion in their lessons. Adults understand the needs of pupils well. As a result, they match learning tasks appropriately to pupils' needs. Additional adults provide support where needed and this provides pupils with an extra layer of teaching to consolidate their understanding.
- Teachers' use of engaging texts and familiar contexts in English lessons helps pupils with SEND to make progress in their learning. Teachers ensure that pupils use out-of-class interventions appropriately, for example the use of phonics to support spelling when writing, to help pupils' learning in the classroom. The work in books of pupils with SEND shows good levels of progress overall. Some pupils with SEND have made rapid progress and their writing is now more accurate and has more detail.
- Finally, I considered how well leaders are tackling attendance and, particularly, persistent absence. The proportion of pupils who have attendance lower than 90% rose to above national figures in 2017.
- Leaders have worked with the Trust to put into place robust systems and processes for monitoring attendance. Leaders prioritised supporting parents' understanding of the negative impact of poor attendance. Leaders have also introduced incentives to improve attendance.
- Leaders regularly track and analyse data for attendance. They offer opportunities for parents to meet with the Trust Family Services lead to discuss any challenges

parents may be facing that are impacting on their children's attendance.

- These strategies are having a positive impact and the number of pupils with attendance below 90% is decreasing. Attendance for disadvantaged pupils has also improved and is closer to that of other pupils.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Pupils continue to embed their writing skills so that the quality of their writing across the curriculum matches that produced in English lessons.
- Improvements already seen in mathematics learning continues to support more pupils to reach the greater-depth standard.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees (academies) and the chief executive officer of the multi-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

Nicholas Flesher  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with leaders, including the local governing board and the chief executive of the trust, to discuss their evaluation of the school's effectiveness, and its improvement plans. I considered documentation provided by you and information on the school's website. I visited all classes in the school. I reviewed a sample of pupils' books. I spoke to pupils about their learning during my visits to classrooms and in the playground. I also met with a group of pupils from Years 1 and 2. I reviewed 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View.