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Jemima Wade
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Dear Miss Wade

Short inspection of Argyle Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 January 2015

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.

The leadership of the school is strong and stable. Leaders at all levels work effectively to address the school's improvement priorities, which they identify accurately. Your leaders are unified in their relentless pursuit of high-quality teaching and support for all pupils. This is to ensure that the pupils get the very best educational start in life. You allow no room for excuses, and the school continues to move forward at pace. Leaders are effective at identifying and tackling any challenges that pupils may have. As a result, pupils achieve well from their different starting points.

You and your leaders have galvanised the support of the school community in addressing the areas for development identified in the previous inspection. Effective training and expert guidance from leaders have enabled teachers and additional adults to challenge pupils in their work. As a result, in 2018, there was a higher proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who achieved the higher standard in writing and mathematics in key stage 2. Current assessment information shows there are now more pupils achieving the greater depth standard in reading. This is compared to previous years.

You have taken a zero-tolerance approach to address pupil absence. There is a unified

message from staff at all levels regarding the importance of pupils attending the school. You work alongside families whose children are at risk of non-attendance, providing them with support to elicit improvements. Your work has paid off, as current attendance information shows a marked reduction in absence levels. Similarly, you have reduced the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent by two thirds.

Parents and carers are complimentary about the work you do. They appreciate the quality of information they receive from the school, particularly around how their children make progress in a wide range of subjects. In their responses to the online survey, they expressed appreciation of the many opportunities there are for pupils to strengthen their social, moral and cultural development. Typical of their comments was: 'The children are taught to be kind, responsible, hardworking global citizens - aware of others' needs and ready to take on challenges.'

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They move around the building sensibly and are articulate, confident and courteous. Pupils respect each other's ideas, and they work and play very well together. There is a sense of teamwork at the school. Pupils talk fondly about how they help and support each other, including pupils who are new to the school. They are adamant that bullying does not exist in their school.

Governors have a deep and expert understanding of the work of the school. They pay regular visits to the school, and are kept up to date via leaders' regular and clear reports. They talk about the actions leaders have taken in detail, and they offer timely and sharp challenge. They are effective at deploying resources to address those areas identified as priorities for improvement. They have, for instance, allocated some of the school's pupil premium funding to ensure that pupils receive high-quality teaching of Latin. Pupils who have a passion for music are appreciative of the support they get to access free musical instruments and tuition.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors ensure that staff have a detailed understanding of how to keep children safe. Records show that staff are effective at identifying risks. Concerns are promptly recorded, reported and referred. Required training is supplemented with regular updates to help keep safeguarding at the front of people's minds. Records relating to the safeguarding of children are detailed, organised and up to date.

Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities relating to the safeguarding of pupils in their care. In addition to their internal checks, they commission audits on the school's safeguarding procedures. They check the suitability of staff regularly.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They talk confidently about the many ways to keep themselves safe at home, at the school or online. They benefit from the many opportunities within the curriculum to learn about e-safety. Leaders have ensured that older pupils learn about ways to protect themselves from radicalisation and from those who advocate gangs.

Inspection findings

- During our initial discussion, we identified reading in key stage 2 as a key line of enquiry. This was because, in the past, pupils made variable progress in this subject. Further, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved the higher standard in key stage 2 remained below average in 2017 and 2018.
- Leaders have reviewed and overhauled the school's approach to the teaching of reading. You invested heavily in ensuring that all pupils have access to high-quality reading materials. You established strong links with families, which resulted in pupils reading more regularly at home. Pupils' reading records show, not only that they are accessing books at home, but that they are engaging in activities which develop their reading skills further.
- Teachers and additional adults are effective at providing pupils with learning experiences which help to develop their comprehension skills. Teachers have strong questioning skills, which enable them to probe pupils' deeper understanding of what they are reading. As a result, pupils develop the more sophisticated skills of inference and deduction. Current assessment information shows a higher proportion of pupils in key stage 2, including disadvantaged pupils, are meeting the greater depth standards in reading.
- We also agreed to look at the teaching of mathematics in key stage 1. This was because, in the past two years, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who met the expected standard in mathematics in key stage 1 was lower than the national average, although not significantly so.
- Leaders ensured that staff have received effective training and support to deliver a rigorous mathematics curriculum. Across key stage 1, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills. In this way, they are achieving mastery over time. Pupils benefit from learning experiences which support the development of their mathematical reasoning skills. Adults provide effective support which enables pupils to develop strong mathematical vocabulary. As a result, all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in mathematics across key stage 1. However, disadvantaged pupils need to be supported and stretched further, so that a higher proportion of them achieve greater depth in mathematics.
- Finally, we looked at the wider curriculum. We wanted to check whether pupils achieve equally well across their other subjects as they do in the core subjects of reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy and excel in a wide range of subjects. Leaders have carefully planned sequences of learning to ensure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills. Pupils make strong progress in their historical understanding. This is because they are skilled at studying objects and artefacts to establish how people lived in the past. Similarly, pupils achieve well in science. Teachers regularly challenge pupils' scientific thinking, and encourage them to carry out investigations to deepen their knowledge further.
- Teaching and learning in the arts are strengths of the school. Across year groups, pupils produce stunning pieces of artwork which showcase the strong progress they make in this subject over time. Pupils study the work of classical and modern artists in detail. By the time they reach Year 6, their sketches reflect a deep understanding of proportion, depth and perspective. Music teaching in the school is equally strong.

Pupils talk fondly about the many opportunities they receive to develop their musical skills. Those who have a passion for learning instruments are provided with additional lessons, and you ensure that those who cannot access their own instruments are supported.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 are challenged further to enable a higher proportion of them to achieve the greater depth standard in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Edison David
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and with members of the senior leadership team. I spoke to a number of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and their views on learning and behaviour. I held discussions with a representative of the local authority. I considered 31 responses to the parent survey, 13 responses to the staff survey and 37 responses to the pupil survey. I met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. I considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website. I looked at the single central record of staff suitability checks and the school's analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with school leaders, I visited lessons to observe learning and I looked at samples of pupils' work across all subjects. I listened to pupils read from across the ability range.