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Miss Louise Lynch  
Executive Headteacher  
Royal Park Primary Academy  
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Kent  
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Dear Miss Lynch

### **Short inspection of Royal Park Primary Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 22 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 February 2013.

#### **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.

You and your leadership team have prioritised your relationship with parents and carers, pupils and the local community. Your ethos for equality epitomises this. You believe in being fair and treating everyone the way they deserve to be treated. You understand, embrace and celebrate the differences in your community and are proud of the diversity within the school family. The school roll is increasing and a number of parents told me that they feel the school keeps their children safe and that the school is managed well. Pupils have regularly exceeded national standards in core subjects at key stages 1 and 2. Where there are inconsistencies in outcomes, leaders act quickly to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.

Leaders elicit the views of parents and act on their responses. For example, parents asked for more activities at the weekend so that those who work during the week might attend. The school summer fair now takes place at the weekend and other activities which utilise the on-site forest area also take place at the weekend. Communication with parents is a strength of the school. Parents appreciate the recently implemented assessment tool that enables them to monitor the progress of their children. Parents are beginning to upload their own photographs to the

application, and teachers are using this to supplement the school's assessment information.

The school supports and distributes food vouchers through a food bank. This supports parents with dignity and has pupils at the heart of the school ethos. Leaders recognise changes in the school cohort and react appropriately through an inclusive programme of both family and pupil support. The school works ultimately to support its pupils but leaders recognise that this can often be accomplished by supporting parents.

A cohesive approach is central to your leadership team. Governors appreciate the support leaders give their staff. Senior leaders see the benefits in staff working with other schools. Middle leaders successfully share their expertise with other schools within the trust. They benefit from experiencing different teaching and learning approaches and they regularly use this to refine their own practice.

Adults at the school are inclusive. They base their attitudes on the school ethos that everyone will achieve and on supporting the whole child. Leaders are clearly aware of how well pupils are progressing towards their personalised targets. Disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 now read extremely well. The introduction of the reading cafe has been embraced by parents at the school and uptake is high. Pupils in Year 6 were observed learning about the Inca number system in a dynamic interactive session.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders know their pupils and the context of the local community extremely well. They use this knowledge to keep pupils safe. Leaders keep meticulous records so that safeguarding issues can be tracked and cross-referenced. All staff understand the need to report issues using school protocols and in a timely manner. Safeguarding records show that leaders act quickly to support their pupils. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to manage the help that pupils and their families receive. The prominent pupils' well-being committee exemplifies leaders' care for their pupils.

Pupils told me how the school keeps them safe. They know how to keep themselves safe online and what to do if they feel threatened. The school curriculum focuses on open and safe discussions on equality. Pupils told me that they like to learn about world religions and other races.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on three lines of enquiry. The first was based on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This was chosen because recent progress for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 was below that of their peers nationally.
- Leaders have recognised the need to support the disadvantaged pupils at the

school. Following an analysis of the progress of disadvantaged pupils, leaders have identified those pupils who are unlikely to make expected progress compared to national standards. Leaders have made sure that teachers are fully equipped to support the needs of all pupils. Teachers are made aware of the disadvantaged pupils in their classes and have received specific training related to supporting their learning. A new teaching approach has been introduced that engages adults with disadvantaged pupils. Adults in classrooms ensure that pupils work at a level that stretches their abilities, and pupils respond well to the challenge.

- Leaders quickly identified those disadvantaged pupils who have fallen behind in their reading. Vocabulary lessons target the gaps in pupils' general knowledge, consequently broadening their high-level vocabulary. This has led to accelerated progress in reading for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1.
- In the majority of year groups, the gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and that of their peers are closing. Interventions funded through the pupil premium are having a positive impact. This is due to the individual support that the school provides to improve pupils' core skills and the workshops implemented for disadvantaged pupils.
- The second line of enquiry was based on pupils' progress in mathematics. This was chosen because, recently, pupils in key stage 2 had underperformed in mathematics compared to other core subjects.
- Pupils' broad skill base makes a significant contribution to progress in mathematics. Pupils in key stage 1 are well prepared to begin their key stage 2 studies in mathematics. For example, in lessons, a number of children from the Reception classes were proficient in understanding the equivalence of a bottle being half-empty and half-full.
- Pupils in key stage 2 use their reading, comprehension and reasoning skills to access multi-stage mathematical problems. Pupils are excited by the extension activities posed for them. They show resilience in finding patterns in their mathematics. Pupils work together, showing both independence from adults and a strong team ethic. Pupils also take charge of their own learning, and the work in books shows accelerated progress over time.
- Teachers provide effective feedback on pupils' work and quickly address their misconceptions. They analyse pupils' work to spot their difficulties and use this information to inform the beginning of lessons. There are also recaps at the beginning of the day to reinforce prior learning. Homework is used to close gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge. These approaches are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. In mathematics, pupils are making progress equivalent to that in reading and writing.
- The third line of enquiry focused on attendance. We chose this because absence at the school has been – both recently and historically – above the national average.
- Leaders have introduced a number of interventions to improve attendance. A concerted effort to improve pupils' punctuality has been effective. The

introduction of the learning cafe has given pupils a purposeful start to the day. Punctuality has improved, as has – subsequently – attendance.

- Overall, absence is currently slightly higher than the national average but not significantly so. Persistent absence in 2017/18 was lower than the national average and leaders are continually addressing the issues surrounding attendance. Appropriate rewards and sanctions are used to reduce absence. Pupils told me that they understand the need for reducing absence and that they appreciate the rewards for high attendance.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- gaps in the progress of disadvantaged pupils – particularly in key stage 1 – continue to close.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jason Hughes  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I held meetings with school leaders, staff and pupils. I looked at a range of pupils' work together with teachers and middle and senior leaders. I met with the chair of governors. Leaders accompanied me on visits to lessons, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at their work. I examined a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including the single central record.

I scrutinised Ofsted's online survey for parents and associated commentary (79 comments) and the staff survey (37 responses). I examined the school's website and reviewed information about pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. I also considered the school's evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement priorities and assessment information for current pupils.