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Miss Emma Bloomfield
Headteacher
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Dear Miss Bloomfield

Short inspection of Purford Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on Thursday 27 February 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

Purford Green Primary School is a welcoming community where the welfare of its pupils sits at the heart of its work. With your leaders, you make sure that pupils receive personalised help and support. This encourages them to be more confident members of the school community. Pupils say that The Den, where they can go if they need time with an adult, is a good idea because it helps them to talk about their problems. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive. This means that pupils know the importance of respect and tolerance. They are proud that they designed the characters allocated to each of the school values. You are working with pupils to make sure that they link these values to their everyday experiences in school.

Pupils told me that they love coming to school because their lessons are interesting and exciting. They know that teachers expect them to do their best and so they work hard in lessons. One pupil told me: 'I always challenge myself and if it's too hard, I keep trying.' During this inspection, I saw very good behaviour; pupils were polite and enthusiastic to speak with me.

Parents are very positive about the school. One told me that 'this is an amazing school' and another said that she is glad that teachers always push her children in their learning. Parents appreciate that the staff are quick to help out when their children are struggling. One parent wrote that staff know the children by name and

this 'gives a lovely personal touch which makes me feel comforted'. Your procedures for dealing with parental complaints are thorough.

Staff are resoundingly positive about your leadership. They are proud to work at the school because they feel motivated, respected and well cared for. They say that the school has improved since the previous inspection and is well led and managed. They appreciate the training that leaders arrange because it helps them to improve the quality of their work.

In 2017, pupils' attendance dipped. The Passmore's Cooperative Learning Community Trust Board supported the school with the appointment of an education welfare officer who works effectively with leaders and trustees to make sure that pupils attend regularly.

The local governing board and the trust board strike a happy balance of mutual challenge and support. They work effectively with you and other leaders to determine priorities for the school development plan and check on progress towards them. They are fully behind the initiative undertaken by the associate headteacher to work with pupils on their mental health because they recognise that increasing numbers of pupils need this support.

The trust board works in a transparent way with local governors. The trust board supports collaboration between schools in the trust. For example, the trust board coordinates peer reviews across the trust. You play a key part in these reviews and make your learning from them apparent to staff through feedback and action planning.

Leaders have evaluated the effectiveness of the school accurately and honestly. This means that you all act urgently where there is underperformance or weakness. You work effectively with the associate headteacher because your skills complement each other. You challenge and support each other in equal measure and you communicate well with each other. You have strong capacity to continue making improvements to the school.

The pupil premium leader has successfully raised the profile of provision for pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Teachers now discuss pupils' individual achievement at regular meetings. She has monitored pupils' attitudes to learning and, as a result of her work with pupils, they are now more confident and are making better progress.

You have implemented a new way of teaching mathematics because your evaluation of teaching quality and pupils' progress showed that they were not as good as they needed to be. You have supported teachers by demonstrating effective teaching and by providing good-quality training. You judge that teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is strong enough to expedite improvements and, based on the evidence from this inspection, I agree.

The inclusion leader joined the school in January 2019. She has identified strengths

and areas for development in teaching and has led training accordingly. She is introducing a range of ways to measure the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) so that there is a more accurate picture of their progress. Based on these measures, all pupils with SEND are making at least average progress from their starting points.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Pupils, together with their parents and staff, are rightly confident that the school is a safe place. Leaders, including governors, have created a culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff are confident to raise concerns and one member of staff told me that it is important not to 'ignore small pieces of the jigsaw,' as they may build up a bigger picture of safeguarding concerns. Staff know what to look out for where pupils are subject to possible radicalisation and sexual exploitation. They know how to raise their concerns if a pupil is missing from education.

Pupils told me that you take swift and effective action where they raise a concern about their well-being. Pupils have a trusted adult to approach if they are worried and they told me that their problems 'get sorted out swiftly'. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. They say that the assemblies on internet safety help them to understand some of the dangers. Pupils told me that bullying is rare.

Safeguarding leaders are committed to ensuring that safeguarding procedures are compliant with statutory guidance, robust and fit for purpose. A member of staff works across the trust academies to make sure that the single central record is carefully and thoroughly maintained.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that I would look in detail at the progress of disadvantaged pupils of average ability in writing and mathematics in key stage 2. I wanted to consider the impact of the school's work in this area because these pupils did not appear to be making as much progress as other pupils. In addition, your previous inspection report asked you to improve teaching for different groups of pupils.
- Pupils recall well what they have previously learned and this means that they are well placed to tackle new learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and this means that, in many cases, they are able to stretch and challenge pupils effectively. In most classrooms, teachers use the new agreed way of teaching mathematics which includes short, sharp recall sessions. They deploy teaching assistants effectively so that they ask and reword questions and concepts well to support the pupils with whom they work.
- Pupils' books show that they are making strong progress. For example, in writing books, pupils are now using much more sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structure than previously. Pupils edit their work with increasing confidence and

accuracy. In mathematics books, pupils work with bigger numbers when adding and subtracting. They apply their learning across a range of concepts. For example, they use their knowledge of place value to convert measures from centimetres to metres and centimetres.

- A few minor inconsistencies in teaching remain. Some teachers do not explain mathematical concepts clearly enough to make sure that pupils understand them well. Pupils choose their own 'challenges' and sometimes these are too easy for them. Although teachers provide opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking, they do not support them to explain in any detail.
- I considered how well leaders make sure that teachers adapt the key stage 1 mathematics curriculum for pupils who receive SEND support. Published assessment information shows that these pupils make slower progress in mathematics than in reading or writing. This is an area of focus for you. Additionally, the previous inspection team identified an action to improve pupils' use of mathematical terminology and develop their skills in using and remembering number facts.
- Pupils who receive SEND support work hard and make progress in, for example, using bigger numbers in word problems. Pupils are now using their understanding of number across a range of contexts, such as place value linked to money. In many cases, these pupils are well supported to have access to their learning through, for example, speaking frames on displays.
- However, some do not receive the support they need to carry out the tasks set for them. Although some teachers provide a range of activities for these pupils, this is not yet a consistent feature across the classes. In a few cases, teachers do not pick up pupils' misconceptions quickly enough and this means that inaccuracies are reinforced.
- Finally, we agreed that I would look at the extent to which the key stage 1 curriculum meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils. This was because these pupils do not do as well as other pupils nationally.
- In lessons, pupils use resources and equipment to support their understanding of concepts. Pupils pay close attention to what the teacher is telling them and readily use displays to help them with their thinking. Their books show progress in, for example, solving more complex problems. Teachers sequence learning carefully, and this means that pupils recap and recall skills and concepts well.
- However, teachers do not routinely give detailed enough explanations of pupils' errors or encourage pupils to explain their thinking. As a result, pupils' explanations are rather shallow. Some pupils waste learning time while waiting for the teacher to give them the next task. Together, these aspects hinder the development of pupils' independence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they extend the work on pupils' language development to support pupils to explain their thinking in greater detail

- teachers consistently adapt their teaching to meet the various learning needs of pupils in their classes.

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 Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Jones
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the associate headteacher, the inclusion leader and the pupil premium leader. I met with a group of five governors and trustees. I spoke on the telephone with your external school improvement adviser. I spoke with 12 parents and took account of 39 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I evaluated a range of documentation, including your self-evaluation, the school development plan and documents relating to safeguarding, including the single central record, child protection records and bullying and racist incident logs. I considered published assessment information along with the school's own information from monitoring pupils' progress. Together with you and the associate headteacher, we made short visits to each classroom to observe teaching, and speak with pupils about their learning. I also spoke with a group of 10 pupils about their learning and welfare. I reviewed samples of pupils' English and mathematics work.