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Mrs Kiran Thapar
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Thapar

Short inspection of Grange Park Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 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.

Pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics continues to be a strength. Pupils make good gains from below-average starting points to meet, and often exceed, the national standards at the end of key stage 1. You have strong links with local schools that provide wider curriculum opportunities for pupils, such as participation in the current dance festival. These links also enable leaders to develop their knowledge and expertise, working with local colleagues to support school improvement priorities.

You describe your staff team as a strength of the school. Staff know their pupils extremely well and shape their learning accordingly. The school has the equivalent of a whole class of pupils moving in and out each year. Your staff team works hard to help new pupils who arrive throughout the academic year to settle quickly and to make as much progress in their learning as possible. Leaders closely monitor the learning of all pupils, including new arrivals, and take steps to provide them with appropriate support when needed. For example, the new physical dexterity group in the Nursery is strengthening children's fine motor skills, which in turn is supporting their writing development.

Your work with parents and carers is a real strength too. Parents speak positively about the progress their children make in school. Typical comments from parents include 'very happy with the progress my child has made' and 'my child is more confident'. Parents are also very appreciative of the 'excellent support' and the training provided to them by

staff, whom they describe as 'hard-working' and 'friendly'. Pupils and staff share this enthusiasm for the school and are proud to be members of the Grange Park Infant and Nursery School community.

The previous inspection report identified the need for writing to be taught in all classes so that pupils' achievement in writing matched that in reading and mathematics. All pupils now have the opportunity to write regularly and in a wide range of subjects. Your evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development is accurate. You continue to focus on the quality of teaching and learning in writing and phonics. Pupils' attendance also remains an ongoing focus, as it below average.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The focus on training across the governing body and staff team ensures that everyone understands their shared responsibility for safeguarding. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet. Pupils, staff and parents all say that pupils are safe in school. Consequently, the safeguarding culture in the school is strong.

School records show that staff are confident in referring any welfare concerns, and that these are addressed swiftly, working with external agencies where appropriate so that pupils and families receive the support they may need. Governors are well informed about safeguarding and regularly monitor different areas. For example, having recently observed a fire drill, the chair of the governing body was able to see that pupils know how to exit the building quickly and safely. Governors speak positively about the steps you take to ensure that pupils with medical needs are well supported.

Inspection findings

- First, we looked at the action leaders have taken to improve the teaching and learning of phonics across the school. Over time, there has been a decline in the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In 2018, the school figures fell below the national standard. Disadvantaged pupils, in particular, did not achieve as well as others nationally.
- You have reviewed the approach to the teaching and learning of phonics across the whole school to ensure that this decline is reversed. You have sought to raise the consistency of teaching in the Reception classes with the appointment of full-time teaching staff. Leaders have put in place more regular, focused assessments of pupils' phonics skills to inform teachers' planning. Additional individual and small-group interventions now start earlier in Year 1 so that no pupils fall behind. You also provide lots of training opportunities and resources for parents to help them to support their children in phonics.
- Pupils are eager to participate in phonics lessons and happily share their learning. Pupils who read to me were able to use their phonics knowledge and skills well to help them to read unknown words. They proudly showed me the sounds and words they have learned to read this year. In lessons, teachers ask targeted questions to check that pupils can hear and recognise the newly taught sounds. They ensure that pupils

practise writing the letters that the sounds represent to reinforce the link between reading and writing. In addition, the sounds and common words being taught are displayed in classrooms to help children in their reading.

- Pupils in all classes are now making good progress in phonics. This includes the new arrivals and disadvantaged pupils, many of whom have additional learning needs. This is evident in pupils' work and from the school's assessment information. You agree that you need to consolidate the initiatives put in place this year to regain the previous high achievement.
- Second, we agreed to look at how leaders ensure that pupils make as much progress in writing as possible so that they meet and exceed the expected standards for their age. This is because there was a dip in standards in 2018 for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Children make strong progress from their below-average entry in the Nursery to the end of Year 2. Staff in the early years foundation stage place a great deal of emphasis on the acquisition of early speaking, listening and language skills. Children are encouraged to write independently and use their phonics learning to help them. Staff work effectively with parents to maximise children's progress in these skills.
- In key stage 1, writing activities are linked to pupils' interests. This engages them in their work and many pupils write at length. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils were writing to the headteacher outlining 'George the Giant's' many qualities so that he could be awarded a certificate. Teachers provide opportunities for role play and discussion before asking pupils to write. This helps pupils to rehearse sentence construction and gives them ideas for their writing. Links to high-quality class reading texts also engage all pupils, especially boys, in developing their ideas for writing.
- Leaders have identified specific barriers to pupils' progress in writing. These include the correct use of tenses and composition. In lessons, teachers are effective in modelling correct grammar by repeating pupils' spoken contributions, subtly amended where necessary for accuracy. The recent initiative of giving pupils individual feedback time provides further opportunity for pupils to edit and improve their writing.
- The work in pupils' books clearly demonstrates the strong progress that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making in their writing. Pupils are increasingly applying their phonics skills to their writing. In Year 1, for example, a pupil had made a plausible attempt to write 'hungry' as 'hugrie'. The school's assessments confirm this. The staff team has a real expertise in assessing pupils' writing. This ensures that assessment in writing against the national standards is accurate.
- Finally, I looked at the effectiveness of leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance. Overall, absence levels have been above the national figure for some time, and persistent absence has been well above the national figure for the last two years. You acknowledge that attendance is always a priority because many families take extended leave during term time.
- You monitor attendance closely and work with the local authority to encourage high levels of attendance. You offer breakfast club places for targeted pupils and do not authorise absence for holidays during term time. You encourage pupils to be in school by having reward systems in place, such as trophies and termly attendance certificates. Following a recent brainstorming session with governors, you have

introduced 'mini-attendance certificates', which provide immediate feedback for younger pupils.

- Current attendance is in line with the national figure for older pupils but below average overall. While there is some improvement for individual pupils, the level of persistent absence is only very slightly down and remains above the national figure.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the recent initiatives in phonics and writing are embedded so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, continue to make strong gains in their learning and achieve well
- overall attendance improves for all pupils and the level of persistent absence is reduced to reach the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Ridding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other senior and middle leaders. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. We visited classes in all year groups to observe teaching and to look at pupils' work. I listened to pupils read in Years 1 and 2 and spoke to pupils during lessons. I met with you in your role as designated safeguarding leader and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding. I evaluated recent information about pupils' progress and attainment. I checked the school's website and documentation available to parents. I considered the views of 24 parents from Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I also read the responses to the questionnaires from nine staff and 21 pupils.