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Miss Janice Owen
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Dear Miss Owen

Short inspection of Longlands Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 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 Longlands Primary 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.

The school has experienced a large turnover of staff since the previous inspection. In the face of this, you have ensured that new staff are well supported and enabled to do their jobs. You have made new appointments to the leadership team to build capacity for the school's further improvement. You are supported well by governors to implement your development plan.

Since the previous inspection you have continued to improve the quality of teaching. You have focused on making sure that teachers provide work that challenges all pupils, particularly the most able. As a result, their progress over time as seen in lessons and pupils' books is consistently good in a range of subjects. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been maintained.

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Mathematics is a popular subject across year groups. In lessons, pupils learn well because they are focused and have strong relationships with their peers. As a result, they are skilled in tackling challenges successfully together. Pupils value teachers' efforts to make work challenging but fun. They are articulate when talking about what they are learning and how they can improve their work. Parents value the warm and caring feel of the school. One parent said, 'It's a great place to visit, where children are happy and eager to learn.'

You continue to reflect on ways in which the school can improve further. You use your own knowledge of the school as well as external advice to help you determine

this. For example, you have sought advice on how to use the pupil premium funding more effectively and have used this to good effect.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your senior leaders have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. You have had the school's work on safeguarding evaluated by the local authority and have been rigorous in acting on recommendations. The school keeps appropriate records of any child protection issues that arise, the actions taken and the impact of these actions. The school acts promptly to ensure that pupils who are at risk receive timely help. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding checks regularly that processes for safe recruitment of staff are in line with the school's policies. This includes regular checks of the single central record.

Staff and governors receive regular training so they know how to keep pupils safe. This includes guidance on how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They believe that the school staff will do all that they can to ensure their well-being. They feel confident going to any adult if they have a problem that they want to share.

The curriculum includes topics such as mental health, staying safe online and other relevant age-appropriate safeguarding topics. There are also trips and visiting speakers to raise pupils' awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils value the information and guidance that these activities give them.

Inspection findings

- I first explored how well the most able pupils in key stage 1 are supported to achieve the greater depth standard in writing. The achievement of this group was an area for improvement at the last inspection, and the attainment of Year 2 pupils in 2018 was not as strong in writing as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils now make good progress in writing. Staff develop pupils' writing skills across year groups in several ways. Pupils are taught to write at length across curriculum subjects. Teachers use interesting and engaging texts to inspire pupils to use a range of vocabulary in their written work. They also regularly get pupils to rehearse their ideas before putting them in writing. The most able writers show a confident use of adventurous vocabulary. For example, a Year 2 pupil described his character as having 'wizardry in his fingers'.
- The books of pupils in Years 1 and 2 show the outcomes of successful teaching and, in particular, that teachers understand what 'greater depth' writing looks like. They support the most able writers well to write at a high standard. Pupils produce well-structured writing for different purposes and audiences. They have frequent opportunities for sustained and extended writing. As a result, they write with enjoyment, confidence and flare. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in writing is currently higher than in previous years. Leaders are now working on improving pupils' handwriting as this is not consistently good across key stage 1.
- Next, I considered leaders' work to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils

by the end of key stage 2, as the progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2018 was below that of their peers nationally. My focus was on reading and mathematics.

- The school has recently changed its approach to catering for the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Overall, disadvantaged pupils are taught well and their needs are well catered for. Their progress is monitored regularly and staff make changes to the support that they receive, based on this information. New interventions include a 'pupil advocate' system, where adults work with small groups of pupils to address their individual barriers to learning. There is evidence of some impact of this work on pupils' attitudes and achievement, but the school's plans to monitor this are at an early stage of development. The school has also considered carefully the provision for disadvantaged pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have refined assessment procedures and how staff are held to account for the progress of all pupils.
- The progress of current disadvantaged pupils, as seen in books, is at least good in both reading and mathematics. The evidence suggests that while older disadvantaged pupils are not yet making the same progress as their peers, this gap is closing lower down the school.
- My third line of enquiry related to the teaching of phonics. In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check dropped to below the national average. I examined the actions leaders have taken to address this.
- Leaders have worked swiftly to improve the teaching of phonics in key stage 1. They ensure that they regularly check pupils' progress, taking into account their attainment at the end of Reception. Pupils are taught phonics through a range of subjects and apply what they have learned in their writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy reading and have access to a range of texts. They increasingly read and understand texts independently. Some pupils report that they create their own books at home using inspiration from books they have read.
- As a result of the school's actions, most pupils who did not reach the expected standard in Year 1 in 2018 now do so. Current Year 1 pupils' progress in phonics is at least good, with some pupils making rapid progress as a result of targeted support.
- My final line of enquiry looked at pupils' rates of absence. I looked particularly at the proportion of girls and disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent. These groups had previously had absence rates that were higher than pupils nationally.
- Leaders work well with the educational welfare officer to monitor pupils' absence. Strategies to improve persistent absence include home visits, letters to parents and a positive reward system for good attendance. The school sets clear expectations for pupils' attendance and this is communicated regularly to parents. Pupils understand how absence from school can have a negative impact on their education.
- As a result of the school's work, current attendance for all pupils is improving and is in line with national average. Persistent absence for all pupils and girls has decreased and is in line with national average. The proportion of disadvantaged

pupils who are persistently absent has reduced considerably, but this is not yet in line with all pupils nationally. This continues to be a priority for leaders to ensure that this group attend more regularly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent innovations in the provision for disadvantaged pupils enable them to make accelerated progress in reading and mathematics, so that a greater proportion achieve at the expected and higher standard by the end of key stage 2
- persistent absence for girls and disadvantaged pupils continues to reduce so that these pupils attend school as regularly as their peers.

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

Yours sincerely

Karla Martin-Theodore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other senior and middle leaders to discuss the school's effectiveness. I also had a discussion with four members of the governing body, including the chair. I observed teaching and learning throughout the school with school leaders. I looked at work in pupils' books and heard four children read. I looked at documents and information relating to pupils' current achievement and progress, the school's self-evaluation and the school's improvement plan. I also checked the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements and attendance information. I had a telephone conversation with an officer from the local authority. I also considered 37 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 29 written comments from parents and carers.