

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Ms Polly Baylis  
Headteacher  
Mora Primary School  
Mora Road  
Cricklewood  
London  
NW2 6TD

Dear Ms Baylis

### **Short inspection of Mora Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 December 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

Mora is described by parents, staff, pupils and governors as a 'family school'. It is very well established in the local community. Since your appointment at the start of this academic year, you have successfully developed a partnership between subject and senior leaders, who are united in driving the school further forward. Together, you have already made changes to enhance pupils' learning. These have been embraced by staff and are already having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. You and your team are clear and accurate about priorities for improvement. Your high expectations for developing reading skills further are part of your current work.

The school environment reflects the school's ethos of empowering children to be 'happy, independent, creative individuals'. Pupils are proud of their artwork and writing on display. They are also enthused by their active involvement in the 'working walls' in their classrooms.

Parents overall are positive about the school. They value the work of staff and how they support their children to develop. Pupils throughout the day wanted to show their best. They are well behaved and extremely welcoming. Pupils spoke about their enjoyment of trips and workshops, which complement their learning in class. Staff and pupils mutually respect each other, and this creates a positive atmosphere for good learning seen across the school.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Leaders, including governors, have ensured that keeping children safe is a shared responsibility. The staff I spoke with clearly knew their responsibilities for safeguarding the well-being of children. They shared how this was put in to practice on a daily basis. You and the governor responsible for safeguarding regularly monitor the single central record of staff pre-employment checks. School safeguarding documents are appropriately detailed and well maintained. Staff and governors receive regular and up to date training. The school works closely with external agencies and refers pupils immediately if any concerns arise. Records show that follow-up action is timely and supportive to families.

Pupils I spoke with told me that their teachers, teaching assistants and adults in the school keep them safe. Through assemblies and in lessons they learn about how to keep themselves safe from harm in a variety of situations. They feel confident talking to their teachers if they have any concerns. Overall, parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, feel that the school is well led and managed and their children feel safe in school.

## **Inspection findings**

- We agreed firstly to focus on how pupils, particularly boys and those who are disadvantaged, are supported to develop their writing skills in early years in preparation for key stage 1. This was because the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in Reception has been below the national average for a number of years. Boys, including disadvantaged boys, did not achieve as well as girls in writing at the end of key stage 1 in 2018.
- Senior leaders have a clear vision about providing a high quality of education from the time children enter school. They know what they want all groups of children to achieve in early years and have made changes that are having a positive impact on achievement.
- There has been a change to the curriculum and children in Reception are now provided with more opportunities to write for a purpose. Activities are planned with the intention of developing learning skills through carefully constructed language experiences. This leads to clear progression from mark making to writing sentences which include a variety of words. In children's books we were able to see the impact of the changes and the good progress with their writing. As a school you have rightly identified writing in early years as an area to continue to focus on to raise standards further.
- Pupils in key stage 1 are very enthusiastic about their writing and boys, including those who are disadvantaged, in particular, were very keen to share and read their writing to us. Work in pupils' books shows them making good progress with their writing since the start of the year. Pupils extend their writing well because teachers use their good subject knowledge to model writing for them. Pupils develop the structure to include different sentence starters and descriptive words.

- Next, we agreed to investigate how leaders raise the achievement of boys in mathematics and reading at key stage 1 as they did not perform as well as girls in 2018. Leaders have taken swift and effective action to address these inconsistencies. For example, the mathematics curriculum has been refined. We watched pupils very purposefully measuring coloured water in containers while learning the concept of empty, full, half, three quarters and quarter full. During the activity they spoke in their groups and with adults, showing their understanding of their learning. Work in pupils' books shows all groups of pupils, including boys, learning and retaining knowledge well over time from topics such as telling the time and division.
- New strategies in reading and writing are enthusing girls and boys to fully engage in reading and make progress. For example, themed reading and writing areas have been introduced in classrooms. We saw pupils, including boys, wanting to go and read and write in these areas. In particular, they were developing vocabulary from different types of reading books.
- Leaders ensure that pupils track new vocabulary they encounter through a school-wide initiative. Pupils are very proud to explain the word they have learned that day, which they wear on a sticker. Adults in the school share responsibility for talking with pupils about their new vocabulary. Around the school we saw pupils, including key stage 1 pupils, engaging in conversations about the word on their sticker. Their discussions clearly deepen their understanding of the meaning of new words.
- The final area we focused on was how effectively leaders are raising the standards in pupils' reading, in particular that of girls, at key stage 2. This was because progress in reading in 2018 was below that in mathematics and writing and girls did not achieve as well as boys. Developing pupils' understanding of reading was also identified as an area of improvement in the previous inspection. Leaders have rightly identified this as a priority area and their actions to date are raising achievement of pupils, including girls, in key stage 2 reading.
- Pupils I heard reading read with confidence and were excited about their books. The books they read are appropriate and enable them to be challenged and to reach greater depth; pupils are knowledgeable about their books and express their views clearly.
- Leaders have improved the reading curriculum. Strategies to deepen pupils' understanding of their reading have been introduced. An example of this is giving pupils non-fiction articles to read about the time and events linked to a shared novel. We saw the benefits of pupils using new vocabulary and expressing their opinions clearly in their writing. Girls in particular develop their comprehension and inference skills well. Work we saw in pupils' books across key stage 2 shows girls making good steps of progress in their reading. This is shown through their increased understanding and their more detailed responses to questions about a text. The gap between girls' and boys' achievement in reading is closing. However, we agreed that there is still work to do to ensure that improvements in reading are sustained.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the gap between girls' and boys' achievement in reading at key stage 2 continues to reduce
- children in the early years continue to have access to purposeful activities that develop their writing skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Janice Howkins  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, your deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, four subject leaders, and the chair and vice chair of the governing body. I made joint visits to lessons with you and your deputy headteacher. I held discussions with groups of pupils, as well as talking to parents in the playground. I took account of 39 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. A range of the school's documentation was considered, including information about pupils' achievement; the school improvement plan; and the school's self-evaluation. I reviewed safeguarding checks, policies and procedures, and information about attendance and exclusions.