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Ms Lisa Corrigan
Headteacher
Highfield Primary School
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Dear Ms Corrigan

Short inspection of Highfield Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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 July 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are supported by a team of leaders who share your ambition for continued improvement. You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and a clear plan to address areas of weaknesses. You have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Staff and governors respect your work to ensure that all pupils learn as well as they can.

Leaders have responded to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. All leaders contribute effectively to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are good. Leaders are trained and empowered to monitor their areas of responsibility. Consequently, they are able to put effective actions in place to bring about improvement. You have invested in training additional adults who are now effective partners in teaching and learning. This is particularly evident in the teaching of phonics, where adults are trained to deliver high-quality sessions. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above national average in the past three years.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well, in and out of lessons. Pupils are proud of their environment, and relationships between them are positive. Learning in lessons routinely proceeds without interruption. Pupils talked about their learning confidently, and they were complimentary of the way teachers and school leaders value their opinions. Typical of their comments was: 'Adults listen to our ideas and they are always willing to try them out.'

Governors are committed to the school, and possess a range of expertise and skills. They know the school well, and offer a healthy balance of support and challenge. Governors know the areas for further improvement are around writing and mathematics, and they monitor progress in these areas closely.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and that records are of a high quality. The culture in the school is that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Leaders ensure that checks on the suitability of staff are thorough.

Training for staff is regular and up to date. Staff receive updates and refresher training, including for areas which are of concern locally. Most recently, this included training on the 'Prevent' duty, supporting victims of domestic abuse, and promoting mental health.

Staff and leaders know individual pupils and families well. They work effectively with external agencies to ensure that, when needed, families have access to appropriate and timely support services. Pupils of all ages told me that they feel safe in the school. They know to whom they can report any worries or concerns, and are encouraged by staff to share any issues that trouble them. Pupils also said that bullying rarely occurs in the school. They say that if it happens, adults are quick and effective to deal with it. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep safe, for example, from cyber bullying or misuse of social media. Pupils were able to give specific examples of how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- During our initial discussion, we identified attainment and progress of pupils, including of disadvantaged pupils in writing in key stage 2, as a key line of enquiry. Pupils' progress in writing was significantly above the national average in 2016 and 2017. However, there was a noticeable dip in the rates of progress for key stage 2 pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in this subject in 2018.
- Leaders addressed this promptly by providing pupils with plenty of opportunities to strengthen and practise their writing skills. Through carefully planned activities, pupils learned the importance of accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation. They use these skills confidently when working on sharply focused activities. However, pupils do not routinely use and apply these skills when writing extensively in different subjects.
- Across the school, pupils take care in their presentation. They respond positively to teachers' high expectations and show pride in the quality of work they produce. Over time, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make stronger progress in writing than previously.
- We also looked at progress and attainment in mathematics as a key line of enquiry. While progress for all pupils has been similar to the national average for the past three years, progress made by disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 was significantly below the national average in 2016 and 2018.
- In response to this, leaders have overhauled the way mathematics is taught across the school. Pupils now receive plenty of opportunities to practise and consolidate their

mathematical skills. They are able to demonstrate mastery in different areas of mathematics. As a result, pupils make strong progress in mathematics, over time. However, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not stretched or challenged enough. This means that not all of them are able to achieve the greater depth standard.

- Finally, we looked at the early years as a key line of enquiry. We wanted to establish what accounts for the strong outcomes for children in the setting. This was because in the past three consecutive years, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development has been above the national average.
- Teachers and leaders in the early years work effectively with parents and carers to design purposeful learning opportunities for children. This close school-home partnership ensures that children settle quickly. They make good progress, particularly in their communication, language and literacy, as the year progresses. The environment, both indoors and outside, encourages children to see, hear and learn rich vocabulary. Additional adults provide effective support to develop and extend children's written and spoken language.
- Children benefit from well-established learning routines. Leaders have ensured that children prosper in a safe and secure environment. Adults are effective at supporting children to extend and elaborate their play ideas, thereby maximising learning. As a result, children in the early years make strong progress from their respective starting points.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils routinely use and apply writing skills when writing extensively across the curriculum in different subjects
- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are stretched and challenged to enable a higher proportion of them to achieve the greater depth standard in mathematics.

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

Edison David
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and members of the senior leadership team. I spoke to several pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and their views on learning and behaviour. I held telephone discussions with a representative of the local authority. I met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. I analysed 64 responses to the pupil survey and 15 responses to the staff survey. I also considered documentation provided by the school, and information posted on the school's website. I looked at the single central record of staff suitability checks, and the school's analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with school leaders, I visited lessons to observe learning, and I looked at samples of pupils' work across all subjects. I listened to pupils read across the ability range.