

7 May 2019

Ms Emma Murray
Headteacher
Seven Sisters Primary School
South Grove
London
N15 5QE

Dear Ms Murray

Short inspection of Seven Sisters Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 January 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Leaders' accurate evaluation of the school's work clearly identifies priorities for development and has led to improvements across the school. You have recently appointed a new deputy headteacher and two assistant headteachers to your leadership team. Together, you have a clear understanding of the school's goals and have tackled effectively the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Your staff speak highly of you and they share your vision and determination to continually improve the school. Middle leaders thrive on the opportunity to develop their skills further and feel empowered in their roles. They are clear about their responsibilities and focus well on improving pupils' progress.

You and your leaders have developed an inclusive ethos in which all pupils benefit from the pastoral care you and your staff deliver. Determination for pupils to succeed is established across the school. Pupils say they 'love' school and enjoy learning new things. All the parents I spoke to praise the school highly and state that they have trust in the school's leadership team. They say they have seen many improvements over time.

Safeguarding is effective.

Your leadership team ensures that safeguarding is a high priority across the school and that all staff understand the key role they play in keeping pupils safe. The leadership team ensures that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Staff are knowledgeable, vigilant and well trained. They know the school's safeguarding systems and procedures thoroughly. Staff understand exactly what leaders expect them to do should any safeguarding issues arise, and they take swift and effective action. They have a secure understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Your leaders are aware of local issues which could lead to safeguarding concerns. The school community and life beyond the school gate is always taken into consideration. Detailed record-keeping systems are in place. Your leaders contact relevant agencies quickly if they need to seek advice. You and your leaders work closely with the education welfare officer to support families and address any concerns around attendance and persistent absence. Governors understand their duties related to safeguarding and are kept regularly up to date.

Pupils said they feel safe in school and are able to talk to adults about any worries. Parent discussions confirmed their confidence in the school being a safe place for their children.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that during the inspection I would look at how effectively the school is working to improve pupils' outcomes in reading. This was because last year's reading attainment was in the bottom 20% at both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- On our visits to lessons, we saw children in the early years demonstrating a love of reading. They were enjoying the books available and responded well to the stories read by adults. In other classes, pupils talked about reading enthusiastically. They look forward to the 15 minutes of dedicated reading time each afternoon and speak fondly about using the school library. All understand the importance of reading both for their learning and for fun.
- In some classrooms, teachers' questioning and verbal feedback to pupils helped pupils to gain a deeper understanding of what they were reading and consolidated their existing knowledge. The most able pupils in most key stage 2 classes responded with confidence to challenging questions and linked their responses to the text they were reading.
- We saw good examples of teachers helping pupils to develop different skills to support them with comprehension. For example, in some cases pupils were asked to look for key words and 'clues' in the questions. However, in some classes we saw examples where teachers' use of questioning was not fully effective. In these cases, pupils were not sufficiently challenged to think deeply about the text or explain their answers.
- In our discussions, we agreed that leaders have an accurate understanding of

pupils' needs throughout the school. Some pupils arrive at the school speaking little or no English. However, these pupils make strong progress in reading over time. The inspection findings and your information about pupils' outcomes show that pupils make good progress in reading, although there are still some gaps in their attainment.

- I also looked at pupils' outcomes in writing. This was because last year writing outcomes for key stage 2 stood at 6% at the higher standard. This was low in comparison to national and local outcomes.
- Throughout the school, I saw the impact of leaders' actions to raise the profile of writing. Pupils now write for a range of purposes and learn to write in different styles. They develop their writing skills well and apply these in a range of curriculum subjects.
- In most of the lessons I visited, teachers helped pupils to use grammar accurately in their writing. Pupils could confidently identify different aspects of grammar and apply their knowledge in their own written work. For example, we saw teachers using the idea of a 'sentence journey' where pupils started with a simple sentence and added many tiers to create a complex sentence. These activities support pupils to write at 'greater depth'.
- We saw pupils developing their skills in order to write poetry. Pupils demonstrated confidence in reading their poems to an audience, and responded well to teachers' challenges to make their poems even better.
- Although pupils write in a range of contexts and at length, the quality of handwriting and presentation is inconsistent throughout the school. You agreed that this is a priority for the school this year.
- My final key line of enquiry focused on pupils' attendance and the impact of leaders' actions in reducing persistent absence. This was because over the last three years persistent absence in school has been above national averages.
- You and your leaders are aware of individual pupils, their families and their circumstances. Your knowledge of the school community is strong. Consequently, the school uses a range of strategies to address pupils' absence. For example, staff make telephone calls to families on each day that a pupil is absent. Leaders issue letters for late arrivals and poor attendance. Leaders continuously remind families about the importance of good attendance on pupils' learning. The school has set up a free breakfast club for all families and works closely with the education welfare officer to address persistent absence.
- These targeted actions have started to make a difference. The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced. Attendance has improved even though it is still below the national average. There is still more to do to ensure that pupils' attendance improves further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are consistently high throughout the school
- persistent absence reduces further, and pupils' attendance improves, so that it is at least in line with 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 the London Borough of Haringey. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gulcan Asdoyuran
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and your senior leaders to discuss the school development plan and agree the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I held meetings with your middle leaders. I met with the designated safeguarding lead. I met with the chair of the governing body and other governors.

I spoke to a representative of the local authority. I spoke formally to a group of pupils and talked to pupils informally throughout the day.

Together, we looked at pupils' work in classrooms and I looked at a selection of pupils' workbooks. We visited classrooms throughout the school to observe pupils learning. I met with a group of nine parents.