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9 May 2019

Mr Neil McAuliffe
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Dear Mr Neil McAuliffe

Short inspection of Park Mead Primary

Following my visit to the school on 25 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 April 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since your appointment in September 2018, you and other leaders have quickly identified the right priorities to help the school improve. You have made significant changes to the leadership structure of the school. These recent appointments are quickly impacting on the standards of education pupils receive at the school. As a result, there is a rapidly improving picture of better outcomes for most pupils.

You and other leaders have become more astute at identifying and providing appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for pupils with low academic starting points. Leaders have effective personalised plans in place for pupils with SEND. Leaders have an accurate overview of the progress pupils with SEND make over time. Your work to improve teaching and learning has also impacted well on the standards of achievement of pupils with low starting points. Consequently, pupils in these groups make good progress.

Leaders have maintained the strong, caring culture evident across the school at the previous inspection. Pupils are happy and confident. They enjoy school very much. Most parents who completed the online Ofsted Parent View survey confirmed that their children feel happy at school. One parental comment which reflected the view of many was: 'My child is always happy at school.' Other parents told the inspector about the strong ethos of support and care you and your staff provide for pupils.

Parents also commended the systems you have in place to keep them well informed about their children's progress, both academically and socially. Parents value the recently introduced online homework system that helps them know what homework their children receive. Parents of children in the early years particularly value the regular school information updates they receive via social media.

Leaders have implemented effective strategies to develop pupils' writing skills. You and leaders have approached the lower than average end of key stage 1 and 2 writing outcomes of recent years thoughtfully. As a result, there is now a consistent and effective approach to teaching writing across the school. Pupils are making better progress in writing compared to recent cohorts of pupils.

Governors work well with you and other leaders. They know the school's strengths and main priorities well. They ask you and other leaders the right questions to ensure that the school continues to improve. Governors are very ambitious and have high expectations for all pupils. They believe there is much to do to ensure that all pupils achieve their very best, especially in key stage 1. Consequently, they work in a coordinated and strategic way with leaders to secure these expectations. They are very well placed to support and challenge leaders to maintain and further develop the effective improvements underway.

You and leaders have maintained a strong wider curriculum provision in music, physical education and the arts. Indeed, during the inspection all year groups were involved in a highly engaging skipping workshop, organised across the whole day. The inspector observed pupils practising their skipping during playtimes. He heard very enthusiastic children enjoying the final assembly, celebrating the success of the skipping workshop.

Since the last inspection, you have developed the early years outdoor provision well. You and leaders have cleverly designed the large outdoor space to ensure that children engage quickly in self-initiated play and learning, or in adult supported activities. The well-maintained garden space, climbing frames and child-friendly play houses allow children to be inquisitive and explore confidently. Children are happy and safe in this outdoor area because it is used very effectively by early years' staff to help children learn.

Leaders do not have a secure understanding of the impact of their work to improve pupils' attendance to school. Leaders do not analyse the attendance of groups of vulnerable pupils regularly enough. Overall absence rates remain in line with those of recent years.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have a comprehensive record of the appropriate actions they take when staff raise any worries or concerns about a pupil's welfare and safety. Leaders work very well with external agencies in a timely manner. Vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported.

Staff are well trained in identifying, reporting and recording any safeguarding concerns. They know who to talk to if they have any worries about children's safety and well-being. Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding where 'nothing is too small to report'.

Parents are very supportive of leaders' work to ensure that pupils are safe at school. Parents who spoke to the inspector told him how you maintain a caring school where their children feel very safe. Parents value the regular communications between school and home regarding their children's welfare. One parent spoke on behalf of others about leaders taking the time to learn about children as individuals and supporting their specific needs.

Pupils play together respectfully during playtimes. Pupils are well supervised by highly visible staff during breaks. Lunchtimes are calm and respectful. Pupils eat together well and sit quietly with their peers, in the lunch hall. During the inspection pupils followed teachers' classroom rules and high expectations consistently well. Classrooms are purposeful learning spaces.

Pupils know there is someone to talk to about any worries they may have. Pupils told the inspector about placing a 'worry token' in a box in their classroom if they wanted to speak to an adult about any concerns they might have. They value this strategy highly. Pupils like the rewards they receive when they do well in their class work. They enjoy the recognition they receive in assemblies as a result. They are proud when they are invited to meet the headteacher to celebrate their successes in the written work they complete in class.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' work to improve pupils' writing is effective. Recent restructuring of leadership roles and responsibilities has allowed leaders to develop and introduce new and effective teaching of writing strategies swiftly. Leaders have provided subject-specific training and support to all staff, to ensure that the teaching of writing meets leaders' high expectations. Teachers consistently provide pupils with opportunities to explore different writing genres, develop their grammar, punctuation and spelling. In most year groups pupils are making rapid improvements in their written work. As a result, most pupils are making good progress in writing from their starting points. For example, Year 1 pupils have made strong progress since the introduction of new strategies for the teaching of writing this academic year. In Reception classes, children confidently shape letters and write simple words. Further work is required to ensure that more pupils in Year 3 and more boys, across the school, reach the age-related standards in writing.
- Phonics teaching is well organised and effective. Leaders have invested in training teachers and improving the availability of resources to support the teaching of phonics. Pupils are taught in well-considered groups based on their starting points. Teachers challenge pupils to identify sounds in words, read them and give examples of other words with similar sounds. For example, children in Reception were learning how to sound out words such as ear, near and beard,

during the inspection. This challenged children to think about the letters and the sounds they read and heard, before repeating words with the similar sound back to their teachers. Pupils' phonics skills are strong.

- Leaders have appropriate systems and processes in place to support pupils and families with low attendance. Leaders' work with individual pupils at risk of being disadvantaged by poor attendance is mostly effective. However, leaders do not analyse the attendance of specific groups of pupils. As such, leaders do not have an accurate view of the impact of their work on improving the absence rates and persistent absence rates of groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Leaders were able to show that there were slight improvements in the absence rates for these groups of pupils. Nevertheless, absence rates remain below national figures.
- Leaders' work to address the areas for improvement from the last inspection has been successful. Regular staff training and useful, collaborative work with other local schools give teachers more skills and the tools they require to plan learning activities matched to pupils' needs. Leaders commission regular independently undertaken reviews of educational standards across the school. These reviews check leaders' evaluations of the impact of their work to further improve teaching and learning. As a result, leaders have built an accurate view of the standards of work children achieve. Current pupils' work in books showed that they make better progress than those in recent cohorts. Pupils with low starting points are well supported through the improved teaching and learning seen in the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to quickly develop the effective work on writing to ensure that standards continue to improve for all pupils
- they have an accurate picture of the impact of their work on improving pupils' attendance, so that absence rates quickly improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Dylan Davies
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders during the day. He observed learning in most classes, jointly with the headteacher. The inspector

reviewed work in several pupils' books and discussed pupils' progress and attainment with leaders. The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons and playtime. The inspector took account of 89 survey responses submitted by pupils. Parents' views were considered through informal discussions before school, and 118 replies and 114 free-text responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The inspector took account of 30 survey responses completed by staff. He checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding. The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children. The inspector reviewed the school's evaluation and planning documentation and other school information, including the pupils' performance information that is available publicly. The inspector met with governors and spoke with a representative of the local authority.