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Mr Andrew Bocchi
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Dear Mr Bocchi

Short inspection of Sybourn Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 May 2019 with James Hollinsley, Ofsted Inspector, 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 June 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained a good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your leadership team have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection effectively. Leaders are determined to maintain high-quality teaching and learning across the whole school. You have provided opportunities for professional development for all staff. Working in close partnership with the academy trust has ensured that leaders and staff can develop and share best practice. Morale is high and staff feel well supported.

Training to promote the school's positive behaviour policy, 'Stay on green,' has contributed to pupils responding well to leaders' high expectations for behaviour. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and are motivated to do well.

Leaders are ambitious and focused on improving outcomes for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Targeted support for reading, writing and mathematics is effective. As a result, the majority of pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 achieve standards above those seen nationally.

Members of the parental advisory board and representatives of the multi-academy trust are committed to excellence. They hold leaders to account and challenge appropriately. The chair of the parental advisory board leads with a clear vision for school

improvement and demonstrates a strong moral purpose, particularly around outcomes for all pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders ensure that statutory requirements for safeguarding arrangements are met. Records are accurate, up to date and maintained to a high standard. Leaders have robust procedures in place for safer recruitment and for the induction of new staff and trustees, so that all those who work in and visit the school understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Designated safeguarding leaders receive accredited training to ensure that they are up to date with the statutory guidance. Governors have a secure understanding of the importance of the 'Prevent' duty and are knowledgeable of the risks pupils may face within the community. A comprehensive risk assessment and action plan ensure that staff understand the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism. Through my discussions with leaders, members of the parental advisory board and trustees, it is clear that pupils' safety and well-being are a high priority throughout the school.

Pupils told me that they feel safe at school and that adults care about them. They are aware of how to stay safe online and talk confidently about how to avoid the particular risks associated with social media. Pupils said that they know whom to speak to if they are worried about their safety or well-being. Behaviour records show that incidents involving bullying are rare.

Inspection findings

- Our first key line of enquiry was to consider the impact of leaders' work to ensure that the teaching of reading challenges pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils. We chose this because although the progress of disadvantaged pupils was strong, it was not as strong as others.
- Leaders track and analyse progress data effectively to ensure that pupils are achieving well. Leaders told me that pupils receive additional support and targeted reading interventions, and this enables them to catch up quickly. The teaching of phonics is a strength of the school; lessons ensure that pupils apply their phonics skills effectively to their reading. The vast majority of pupils in Year 1 pass the phonics screening check, a much higher proportion than the national average. Daily reading sessions ensure pupils practise their reading skills through independent and partner work.
- You and your leadership team ensure that the teaching of reading is consistent throughout the school. Pupils' books show that they engage in activities that help them practise, improve and consolidate reading skills. For example, activities include summarising information from texts, evaluating the work of the author and making connections with the characters. Consequently, pupils gain a deep understanding of the texts they read. Leaders have embedded a strong reading culture to ensure that pupils read widely for purpose and pleasure. Pupils told me that they enjoy reading, because teachers provide interesting texts and books. As a result, all pupils, including

disadvantaged pupils and the most able, make good or better progress in reading.

- Our second key line of enquiry explored pupils' writing outcomes in key stage 2, particularly those of boys. This was because the outcomes in the 2018 key stage 2 tests show that boys' progress in writing, although above the national average, was not as strong as that of girls.
- Leaders monitor teachers' planning to ensure tasks are engaging, interesting and challenging. Teachers and teaching assistants question and assess pupils' understanding effectively. This ensures that the teaching of writing is adapted to match pupils' needs. Teachers have high expectations of the work that pupils produce and provide opportunities for them to edit and correct their work. Pupils told me that they enjoy it when they check each other's work, as this helps them to write better. Year 6 pupils told inspectors that teachers' feedback is useful in improving the quality of their writing.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in a range of genres, with high-quality resources that are purposeful and relevant. As a result, pupils, including boys, write fluently and at length with increased confidence, demonstrating strong progress over time. Work in books supports this view.
- In Reception, the learning journeys show that children enjoy participating in a range of well-planned activities that promote their early writing skills and development. The 'stay and play' sessions provide an opportunity for positive partnerships between the school, parents and carers, and these enable teachers and teaching assistants to build on children's earlier learning.
- Our final key line of enquiry considered outcomes for pupils in the wider curriculum and, specifically, whether pupils' progress in other subjects is as strong as that found in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You told me that a new curriculum was introduced in September 2018 to ensure balance, breadth and depth of learning. Leaders spoke about their commitment to driving forward further improvements in the curriculum so that pupils would have more opportunities to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects. Pupils have access to a comprehensive range of educational experiences across the curriculum, which supports their interest and engagement.
- Work in pupils' topic books shows that teaching and the curriculum are effective in supporting their progression in subject specific skills and knowledge. For example, the teaching of history is organised in chronological order so that younger pupils learn about ancient civilizations, while older pupils study more recent events such as the Second World War. In geography, topics such as the rainforest and tsunami provide pupils with opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the impact of climate change on world resources.
- The school is working in partnership with the local authority music service to provide opportunities for pupils to play the guitar and violin. Leaders told me that there is an artist in residence at the school, who supports the teaching of art. Displays across the school are highly effective in highlighting the work of pupils across the wider curriculum and celebrating the diversity of the school community. You have specialist teachers for physical education, computing and music to ensure that pupils acquire subject-specific skills and knowledge. Pupils are proud of their learning, and you

have provided opportunities for them to showcase their work. For example, at a recent workshop pupils taught their parents how to conduct a science experiment.

- Overall, the positive effect of the changes you have made to the curriculum is evident in the quality of pupils' work. However, you agreed that you need time to embed the new curriculum and you recognise that there is work still to do.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the work to improve the wider curriculum is fully embedded so that pupils' progress is strong in all subjects they study.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Waltham Forest. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Dawn Titus
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and members of the senior leadership team to agree the key lines of enquiry. We held meetings with the chair of the parent advisory board, a parent and a representative of the Lion Trust. I looked at the school's single central record of checks on staff, as well as checks on trustees, agency staff and volunteers. We visited classrooms, including those in early years, with leaders to gather evidence on pupils' learning. We looked at a range of pupils' books, spoke to pupils during lessons and listened to pupils read. Inspectors met Year 6 pupils to discuss their work. We met with leaders with responsibility for the curriculum and assessment. Inspectors analysed information on pupils' progress and attainment. We scrutinised a range of documentation, including behaviour logs and exclusions. We took account of 62 free text comments and 65 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey, and reviewed the staff survey.