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Mr Du Plooy
Headteacher
Dersingham Primary School
Dersingham Avenue
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Dear Mr Du Plooy

Short inspection of Dersingham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 June 2019 with Teresa Neary, 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 October 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 have established an effective senior leadership team which has led improvements in teaching. Together, you have addressed the aspects for improvement that were identified in the previous inspection and the significant underachievement you inherited. You have identified appropriate priorities to continue to improve the school.

You have set high expectations for what pupils can achieve, based upon your determination for every child to be successful. You focus strongly on academic success, as well as ensuring opportunities for pupils to participate in a broad range of activities which enhance the curriculum. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard to support each other, are polite, resilient and take pride in their school. You prepare pupils very well for the next stage in their education.

The school prides itself on providing children with a happy, caring, healthy and secure learning environment. A strength of the school is the celebration of its diverse community.

You appreciate that a consistent priority for the school is to work in close partnership with parents and carers. You provide many opportunities for parents to support their children's learning including, for example, workshops, the parent council and the 'bug club'. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Comments such as: 'leadership is amazing'; 'discipline in school is better' and 'the school is very approachable' are typical of their viewpoint. Parents appreciate that

teachers know their children and that 'every child does matter'.

In recent years, pupils' progress and attainment by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 have been below national averages. You put in place a full range of strategies to support all pupils. This included the introduction of new programmes for reading and mathematics. These formed two lines of enquiry for my inspection, as reported below. Overall, inspection evidence suggests that pupils' progress is now good and attainment close to national averages.

Governors have a very good understanding of the school. Their knowledge of the local community and close involvement with the school enables them to support school improvement well. Governors use a range of information effectively to challenge school leaders. They ensure that their regular visits to school enable them to see, first-hand, the work of school leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a culture of vigilance in the school. All checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in place. Staff and governors have a thorough understanding of current safeguarding guidance. This includes knowledge of the 'Prevent' duty and of the signs that a pupil may be at risk of female genital mutilation. Leaders work exceptionally well with families and external agencies. For example, they have worked closely with the police and the community relating to recent knife crime. Leaders have also supported families to be rehoused to ensure that children are safe. Such actions demonstrate that vulnerable pupils receive well-targeted support, as required.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using online technology. School assemblies and planned learning activities help pupils to understand how to manage risks online. Learning mentors are effective in supporting families when necessary. Pupils and parents say that the school is a safe place.

Inspection findings

- I first looked at the actions leaders are taking to ensure that all pupils make good progress across the school in mathematics. This was because the progress made by pupils by the end of Year 6 in 2018 was well below average, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have introduced a curriculum that emphasises mathematical reasoning and problem-solving. This is supplemented by a programme to support pupils' learning of times tables so that they can speedily recall number facts. Pupils said that they enjoy the competitive element, which includes reward for both the speediest and most improved. Attention has also been given to monitoring, to identify weaker areas of provision and to professional development. Teachers from a nearby secondary school have supported mathematics teaching, as well as teaching the most able pupils. Workshops have been organised for parents on 'how to help at home', especially to support pupils' learning of times tables.

- These changes have contributed to pupils' improved progress, particularly that of middle- and lower-attaining pupils. For example, pupils were able to order numbers in ascending and descending order as a result of challenging questioning and high expectations. Scrutiny of assessment information and pupils' work suggests that progress is now stronger in all year groups and that greater proportions of pupils are working towards meeting the expected and higher standards.
- For the second line of enquiry, we looked at how leaders enable all pupils to read well. This was because both progress and attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading in 2018 were below national averages.
- The school has prioritised the teaching of phonics and reading. Leadership in English is divided into reading and phonics, with the staff responsible working effectively together. Leaders have provided extensive training so that all staff have expertise in the teaching of phonics. A systematic phonics programme begins with sounds in Nursery and daily phonics teaching in Reception. The indoor and outdoor environments are organised to emphasise vocabulary and early literacy skills. For example, a treasure hunt included simple labels where children had to sound out words to discover the treasure. Monitoring by the phonics leader is effective so that where any underachievement is identified, interventions are made appropriately to support learning.
- Similarly, in key stages 1 and 2, classroom environments and displays are designed to stimulate a love of reading. Leaders have introduced a tracking system to monitor the range and number of books read by pupils and check their understanding. Teachers stimulate a love of reading through the activities they plan.
- Links with parents have been strengthened to promote reading. For example, the use of 'phonic flashcards' enables parents to download an application which equips them well to support the learning of sounds. Parents are invited each term to a reading café, where teachers model reading strategies and parents can sit quietly and read for pleasure. However, a continued relentless focus on parental involvement is acknowledged by the school as necessary to support continuous improvement.
- As a result of these actions, pupils' progress in reading is improving across the school. The structured programme ensures that pupils learn how to decode words before progressing to develop greater fluency and comprehension. Year 2 pupils read fluently, with increasing confidence and with expression. Books chosen match their knowledge of phonics. Year 6 pupils summarise well what they have read and are able to predict what might happen later. Most-able pupils are challenged well, while those who require additional support are provided with effective one-to-one tuition.
- Finally, I looked at how the school's curriculum meets the needs of all its pupils. This was because leaders had identified the curriculum as an area for improvement, introducing a skills-based curriculum in 2018.
- In preparation for the changes, leaders visited schools judged to be 'outstanding' to gain a better understanding of the link between high standards and curriculum development. Subject leaders then revised schemes of learning into key themes,

linked to English. These begin with enquiry questions and are planned in half-term units to deepen pupils' subject knowledge. Pupils say that they enjoy the 'Big Bang' introduction to topics, which provide them with a memorable experience.

- The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teachers in music and physical education and a wide range of visits and visitors. For example, pupils have recently visited the Globe theatre. Disadvantaged older pupils participate in a reading programme with the local community; they regularly visit a local care home to read aloud to local residents. Such activities develop pupils' self-esteem, improve their confidence in reading and emphasise fundamental British values. After-school clubs enrich the curriculum. A good range of sporting activities enable pupils to participate in many competitions across the area.
- The revised curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. Pupils are inspired and aspirations have been raised. Evidence from visits to classes and discussions with pupils show that all are enjoying their learning. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that all groups are making progress. Senior leaders recognise the need to continue to systematically monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes made. Further changes to the curriculum are planned.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recently introduced schemes in English and mathematics are embedded across the school
- staff continue to work in partnership with parents to support home reading and gaps in knowledge.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Barnes
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors carried out a range of activities.

- We met with the headteacher and senior leaders, middle leaders and members of the governing body. I also held a telephone conversation with the school's link adviser.
- We listened to pupils read. We visited lessons alongside members of the senior leadership team and scrutinised a range of pupils' work.
- We reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and information about pupils' progress and the school's curriculum. We also reviewed the school's single central record, pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures.
- I scrutinised the school's website.
- I listened to the views of 11 parents and considered 38 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 47 responses to the staff survey and 42 responses to the pupil survey.