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Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Ania Kennedy

Short inspection of St Mark's Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 June 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 a good quality of education since the previous inspection. Leaders pride themselves on developing positive relationships with families and ensuring each child has a range of opportunities open to them. Pupils enjoy what is on offer at the school. They engage well in learning and appreciate the curriculum available to them.

You and your team make every decision with your pupils' well-being at the centre. Leaders have created a warm and nurturing environment, which provides a safe haven for learning. As a result, pupils are well focused during lessons and respond well to adults within school.

The responses from staff to Ofsted's survey were positive. Your investment in training and development is valued by staff.

Leaders, including governors, know the school well. Self-evaluation is accurate and based on a range of evidence. It is used to effectively to inform training for staff. Governors are actively involved in reviewing the quality of education, and work effectively with school leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding that protects all members of the school community. Staff are vigilant and report issues swiftly, should they arise. Leaders

conscientiously engage with a range of external services to provide support for families where needed.

The staff receive regular and relevant training to make sure they understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding training is incorporated into inductions for new staff, volunteers and governors. Leaders have made sure that all procedures and policies are fit for purpose. All concerns are followed through thoroughly.

Pupils are well supported, and know who to go to if they need guidance. There are a range of systems in place for children to raise concerns. This includes a 'worry box' in classrooms, and some pupils are trained as 'well-being leaders'. Important topical issues are discussed in assemblies to educate pupils on how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection findings

- The first key line of enquiry was to review how well leaders ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning. This was linked to a recommendation from the previous inspection report. There is a strong focus on vocabulary development that provides a basis for discussions and an understanding of how to learn new words. Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to apply their new vocabulary in meaningful contexts.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. Pupils are encouraged to apply and share their learning through well-planned collaborative tasks. For example, pupils were asked to work in groups to identify a range of examples of figurative language and explain the reasons for their choices.
- There are examples of some effective questioning to extend pupils' ideas and enable them to deepen their understanding, but this is not routinely practised. Some pupils are less challenged, as some opportunities to extend learning are lost.
- Pupils are typically well engaged in their learning. However, in some cases teachers do not always make full use of the assessment of pupils to inform their teaching. As a result, pupils are not routinely stretched to their full capacity.
- Our second key line of enquiry was regarding the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially in key stage 2. Leaders have analysed the needs of individual pupils carefully.
- Interventions to provide additional support are well targeted. Leaders have developed bespoke curriculum opportunities to meet pupils' needs within a small group setting. The curriculum incorporates a clear focus on preparing pupils for the next stage of their education, and for adult life. This process helps to address pupils' specific learning needs and helps to raise pupil's self-esteem and confidence.
- Leaders review the impact of interventions effectively. However, further work is required to ensure that pupils' specific learning needs are addressed in a whole-class setting.

- The final key line of enquiry explored how effectively leaders' roles and responsibilities are defined. This was to check the impact this has had on teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders understand their accountability in providing a good education for the pupils. They are well focused on developing teaching and learning and engaging with the community.
- Leaders regularly review the quality of teaching and learning using a range of approaches. They provide additional support and guidance for teachers, to improve their practice. Leaders constantly strive to provide a curriculum that contains a wealth of rich and varied experiences.
- There are clear lines of accountability in place. Performance management is used effectively to ensure that all leaders are focused on raising standards. Leaders work in partnership with other local schools to share successful practice.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they develop the staff's knowledge of and skills in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities within lessons
- they make sure that the most able pupils in key stage 1 are routinely challenged to reach the higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Rai
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and other members of the senior leadership team. I met with three governors and spoke to a representative from the local authority. I had informal conversations with some parents when they were dropping their children at school at the start of the day. I appraised the safeguarding procedures with the designated safeguarding lead. I met with leaders and reviewed pupils' work. You accompanied me on visits to classrooms. I talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed the pupil survey. I reviewed feedback from the staff survey. I also evaluated school documents, such as the school improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings, attendance monitoring and your school self-evaluation.