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Mr Russell Abrahall
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Abrahall

Short inspection of Parsonage Farm Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2017 with Her Majesty's Inspector Carolyn Dickinson, 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. With the support of the new deputy headteacher, and of the assistant headteachers, you provide effective leadership. As a result, you have ensured that the school is a vibrant and enjoyable place in which pupils can learn and be successful.

Your effective leadership has enabled leaders and governors to consolidate and build on the school's strengths successfully. For example, pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are now first rate and make a significant contribution to their personal and academic achievements. You have also improved pupils' achievement, including the progress that disadvantaged pupils make with their learning.

You and your senior team have established a clear set of procedures for evaluating the work of the school and the achievements of pupils. Systems are very well organised and you and your team maintain meticulous records. This allows leaders to track pupils' progress thoroughly. It also enables you to check whether support for those pupils who are falling behind with their work is having a positive impact on progress. As a result, you and your team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This ensures that you take well-founded actions to improve pupils' outcomes.

Teachers have great confidence in your leadership. One of the reasons for this is that they value the support that they get from leaders, including subject and phase leaders, to develop their skills and expertise. This promotes teachers' sense of purpose and commitment to the school's values most effectively. As a result, all staff share your vision for the school and aspirations for pupils, enabling you to bring about improvement effectively.

By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the most able pupils and those from disadvantaged backgrounds do less well. Leaders are taking effective steps to improve the standards of these pupils so that they are at least as good as those of others in the school and nationally. Achievements in key stage 1 have not been as strong as those in key stage 2, especially in mathematics. Again, leaders are tackling the weaknesses effectively. The work to raise standards in key stage 1 is having a positive impact. The evidence we saw in pupils' books, and in lessons, confirmed that the disadvantaged pupils, and the most able pupils, are making strong progress from their starting points.

The quality of teaching and learning plays no small part in this improving picture of pupils' achievements. You, senior and middle leaders, and governors have pushed hard to make sure that teaching is consistently effective. For example, commercially published mathematics and phonics programmes are used to ensure that there is a common approach to teaching across the school. This work has been successful and it is significant that all the teaching we saw during the inspection had a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. This positive effect of teaching is supported by your assessment information, which indicates that the achievements of the most able pupils are improving. Differences between these pupils and those nationally are less marked. However, you recognise that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, could do even better. As a result, this rightly remains a priority for improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are thorough. The school is meticulous in keeping detailed records of pupils who have been referred to social services and follows up these concerns rigorously. This ensures that pupils' needs are met well and that they get the support they need.

All staff have been trained in how to recognise the signs of abuse, including for female genital mutilation. Extremism and radicalisation are also part of the training programme. Staff understand the school's procedures for reporting any concerns and the systems to follow should any issues arise. Governors also have relevant training, including in safer recruitment and the 'Prevent' duty. Governors keep a close eye on the way the school deals with safeguarding, for example by signing that the staff recruitment and vetting records are complete.

Pupils are clear that they feel safe in school and are also taught about keeping themselves out of harm's way outside school. For example, those pupils we spoke

with said that in Years 5 and 6 they are given information about how to be safe walking to school on their own. Regular visits by the local police reinforce the lessons about keeping safe. Pupils noted that they are taught about internet safety in their computing lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 work as 'digital leaders' to help younger pupils understand about cyber bullying and how to keep themselves safe on the internet. Pupils report that bullying is rare and say that they are confident that if it were to happen, their teachers would deal with it very effectively.

Inspection findings

- Leaders' work to raise the achievements of the most able pupils in key stage 2 is proving successful. They recognise that there is more to do to ensure that the most able pupils make even greater progress. For example, the most able pupils are not always reading challenging enough books that extend their skills sufficiently. However, leaders have made some clear improvements to teaching and learning. Consequently, differences in achievement between different groups of pupils are diminishing. These improvements are supported well by the careful assessment and tracking of pupils' achievements. This enables teachers to identify those pupils who are falling behind and provide well-timed and suitable support.
- Attendance continues to improve year on year and is now closer to the national average. This is because the procedures for following up poor attendance are robust. Leaders work closely with parents to help improve individual attendance and the inclusion officer has had a significant impact on reducing absence. Leaders and governors take firm action to deter parents from taking their children out of school during term time. This has had a mixed impact. While the school is successful in getting the local authority to issue fines, this does not always stop parents from taking holidays during term time.
- Attainment in the 2016 tests in key stage 1 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this represented average progress from pupils' different starting points when they start school in the Reception classes. Leaders are tackling this successfully and evidence from pupils' books and lessons shows that achievement is improving. Progress in Reception is strong and teachers build on this effectively in Years 1 and 2. While this is partly the result of small classes in Reception, the consistently strong teaching also plays a key role in promoting pupils' learning. Teachers know their pupils well and plan work that interests them well.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are especially positive. They are highly motivated and very keen to do well. This is because teachers and other adults have high expectations and provide well-established classroom routines. As a result, pupils know exactly what is required of them and how to behave well. However, it is also because leaders and teachers have established a very positive climate for learning right across school. This climate seeps into the fabric of the school and inspires teachers and pupils to do their best.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching continues to stretch and challenge the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, so that they achieve the higher levels and reach their potential
- reducing pupils' absence from school remains a high priority so that attendance is at least in line with national figures.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the inspectors carried out the following activities:

- visited all classes to observe learning, jointly with senior leaders
- met with the headteacher, and senior and middle leaders
- held a meeting with five members of the governing body
- met with a group of pupils to seek their views of the school
- listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reading
- reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and information about pupils' progress, the governing body and pupils' attendance; the school's single central record, pre-employment checks and safeguarding procedures were also reviewed
- looked at the school's website and confirmed that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information
- considered 62 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's own survey.