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10 May 2019

Mrs Donna Adkinson
Headteacher
Middle Park Primary School
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Dear Mrs Adkinson

Short inspection of Middle Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Middle Park is truly a community school that knows its pupils and families really well and offers them the support, guidance and encouragement they need to flourish. You, the leadership team and an experienced, proactive and knowledgeable governing body have an accurate and honest understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. From this, you have been able to plan and implement effective strategies that have underpinned the improvement in pupils' outcomes. Over time, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage is broadly in line or better than proportions found nationally.

Parents and carers readily praise the school and your leadership; pupils say that they enjoy their time at the school and value the different experiences you provide. Speaking with me, and through their responses to Ofsted's staff survey, staff say that you and other senior colleagues are highly supportive. They appreciate the guidance they are given to help improve the quality of their teaching and the plentiful opportunities they have to develop their professional careers. There is an expectation that all staff will develop as leaders and this has led to lots of opportunities to take on additional responsibility in and beyond the school. For example, there has been a strong focus on the identification, development and rigorous training of 'lead practitioners'. These teachers are responsible for pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching in key areas of the curriculum. This has resulted in the development of significant leadership capacity across the school. It is clear evidence of how you have effectively addressed a key issue raised during the

last inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is an embedded culture of safety and vigilance across the school. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are fit for purpose. Pre-employment checks on adults working at the school meet statutory requirements. All staff have regular and appropriate training. Staff who spoke with me understood how to respond to any concerns should they arise.

Records are well organised and show that the school is robust in escalating concern and challenging external advice where the need arises. Leaders, including governors, hold regular meetings where safeguarding compliancy and caseload are checked and follow-up actions agreed. This ensures that the knowledge of pupils and their families is rich and enables the school to provide the right level of support in a timely manner.

The curriculum raises awareness of personal safety in and beyond the school. Pupils spoken to during the inspection could identify a number of ways the school keeps them safe, including staying safe online. They know what to do if they ever felt unsafe and could identify a number of trusted adults in the school.

Pupils feel that behaviour is typically good and incidences of bullying rare. Pupils acknowledge that the systems for ensuring positive behaviour work effectively. This view was echoed by the majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, stating that the school was safe, behaviour was good and that pupils were well looked after.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. The first focused on the actions taken by leaders to ensure that pupils' attendance (including those who are persistently absent) is improving. While pupils' attendance over time has been broadly similar to that found nationally, the level of persistent absence is high.
- Leaders, including governors, have rightly prioritised improving attendance and are robust in challenging and supporting families to do so. Strategies have included home visits for vulnerable pupils, involving more staff in overseeing attendance, effective working relationships with other agencies and rewards for improved attendance. These have resulted in sharply reduced rates of persistent absence this year. Attendance overall, although improving, remains just below the national average and school leaders accept that this remains a priority.
- The second line of enquiry focused on the actions taken by leaders to improve the progress in reading made by the most able pupils. This was because these pupils are making slower progress in reading than other groups.
- The leadership of reading is effective. Leaders have worked well to develop staff knowledge and confidence through a range of professional development

opportunities. Teachers are well supported in using challenging and inspirational texts to ensure that pupils develop as confident readers. As a result, pupils are motivated readers who read widely, frequently and are familiar with a range of authors and their works. Pupils read with confidence, expression and intonation, demonstrating a secure understanding of the text.

- Some teachers use questioning effectively when asking pupils to reflect on the texts they read. As a result, pupils' understanding of more complex vocabulary and ideas is developing well. Pupils show confidence in justifying their opinions and understanding of often challenging texts.
- Teacher questioning does not consistently challenge pupils to define or apply appropriately the richer vocabulary they experience. This sometimes limits pupils, particularly those who are the most able, in securing an appropriate understanding of the text and, therefore, the outcomes of which they are capable.
- The final line of enquiry focused on the impact recent curriculum changes have had on pupils' outcomes. This was because leaders are committed to developing pupils' ability to tackle more complex problems in a variety of curriculum subjects more independently and confidently.
- Visits to lessons, analysis of work and discussions with pupils demonstrate that they readily accept the challenges presented to them. Pupils demonstrate a mature attitude to collaborative learning, even when the work is most challenging. They support and challenge their peers to share ideas and explain their thinking.
- Pupils' speaking skills have been very well developed. They are confident to express views, deal with opinions different from their own, reach consensus and are confident to explain, justify and reason. The curriculum gives pupils strong opportunity to develop a range of knowledge, understanding and experiences.
- Pupils' prior knowledge and experiences are not consistently checked accurately, meaning some pupils are insufficiently challenged, repeating learning they are already capable of while others have not yet secured the foundation knowledge and skills they need to progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers check pupils' prior knowledge accurately so that pupils are either sufficiently challenged and do not repeat learning they are already capable of or secure the foundation knowledge and skills they need to access the learning presented to them, supporting them to progress well
- the initiatives designed to improve attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism continue to embed to ensure that all pupils at risk of low attendance are supported in attending school regularly.

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

Yours sincerely

Nick Turvey
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection began with a discussion of your self-evaluation and we agreed the key lines of enquiry. Together, we visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. I listened to a group of pupils reading. I also spoke with pupils about their learning and how the school helps to keep them safe. Meetings were held with a group of staff as well as those responsible for leading English, mathematics, the wider curriculum, attendance and safeguarding. I met a group of governors and also met two representatives from the local authority. I reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and single central record of employment checks. I also considered responses to the inspection staff survey, pupil survey and Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.