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Andrew Hogarth
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hogarth

Short inspection of Pelham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 January 2016 with Hazel Burnie, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in July 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since the previous inspection, there have been some significant changes. In your role as a local leader of education, you have provided support to other schools. You have shared your valuable experience of school improvement, having moved Pelham Primary from special measures to satisfactory in just 16 months and then onto good in 2011. In April 2013, Pelham Primary School converted to become an academy. Later, in April 2014, you provided leadership support for another local school. Consequently, in April last year, Pelham Primary School welcomed Normandy Primary School into the Pelham Academy Trust. Since then, you have taken on the role of executive headteacher, splitting your time equally between both schools within the Pelham Academy Trust.

The school continues to be well led and managed. Parents agree. In September 2014, the experienced deputy headteacher was appointed as the substantive headteacher of the school, providing stability at a time of change. All leaders, staff and governors have successfully continued to promote the inclusive, welcoming nature of the school. All staff are dedicated to providing the highest levels of care for pupils, ensuring that pupils are tolerant and respectful to fellow classmates and adults alike. Pupils achieve well academically, and the inclusion of pupils from the hearing impairment provision is a strength of the school.

Areas for improvement, identified during the last inspection, have been successfully addressed. Coaching is well established across the school. Many opportunities exist to share good practice and evaluate what is contributing to pupils' progress. This sharing and learning from good practice within and beyond the school ensure the ongoing development of consistently good or better teaching.

Teachers customise their teaching and tasks in mathematics more sharply to ensure pupils are challenged. As a result, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 are above average. Teachers provide helpful feedback and guidance to pupils so that they know how to improve their work.

You and your leadership team employ detailed assessment and monitoring procedures and use the information successfully to identify where additional help or focus is needed. You are aware that further attention is needed to remedy some areas of weakness in pupils' writing. For example, spelling, handwriting and the use of past, present and future tenses in independent writing need consolidating. Also, there is still work to be done to close the attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school.

At the previous inspection, inspectors noted that improvements in the rates of attendance had stalled. Over the last five years, you have purchased good support from the local authority and steadily increased overall attendance at the school. This year, attendance is on track to be broadly average. However, despite recent success in targeting the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils, for example, through free breakfast club provision, attendance remains low for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs. Their attendance remains in the lowest 10% nationally and has declined since 2014. Since the last inspection, you have analysed the attendance patterns for different groups within the school. However, you are now aware of the need to refine this further, to ensure good attendance for all groups of pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your governors, school leaders and staff ensure that safeguarding is embedded in the school's caring culture. Five key members of staff have completed the higher level safeguarding training, demonstrating your commitment to keeping pupils safe. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. You and the headteacher of the school are the designated leaders of safeguarding. You know your pupils well and are tenacious in following up concerns about pupils' safety and well-being, working well with other agencies to support pupils and their families. Governors ensure that they are well trained. They recently attended training on the risks of, and how to prevent, radicalisation, the importance of promoting fundamental British values, and the dangers of child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.

Pupils have a very good awareness of e-safety because you and your staff place a high priority on this. This is made explicit on the school's website. The website includes the e-safety policy, guidance on parental controls and links to high-quality internet safety support materials that are accessible for parents.

Inspection findings

- Governors execute their duties conscientiously. They use their personal skills and expertise to check the different aspects of the school's provision. They are very supportive and work closely with you and your leadership team. As a result of training in school data analysis, they have a good understanding of assessment information. They are rightly proud of the recent improvements in the school, including the results of the Year 1 phonics screening check and the above-average proportions of children in the early years provision who achieve a good level of development.
- Governors know the school's priorities for improvement well and have high aspirations for the school. They visit regularly to see the work of the school in action. In pairs, they meet school leaders to check on progress. Like you, they are aware that there is still work to be done to further improve attendance and writing across the school.
- You have a passionate commitment to ensuring ongoing school improvement. Your staff and governors are extremely committed and dedicated to your vision of continually improving the quality of teaching and learning for all. Staff are overwhelmingly positive, unanimously reporting in the staff questionnaire that the school has improved since the last inspection.
- Staff work well together to support each other. For example, middle leaders have benefited from strong coaching support, and are using their expertise to support whole-school planning. This has been particularly effective in mathematics, where teachers evaluate pupils' learning and match future learning to individual needs.
- Many opportunities exist to share and further develop good practice. For example, staff take full advantage of the opportunities provided to share and develop their expertise, reflecting on their own confidence and training needs through questionnaires. Training is then provided and evaluated for impact on pupils' outcomes. As a result, pupils make good or better progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is in line with national averages for writing, and above for reading and mathematics.
- Your leaders, including leaders of the early years provision, mathematics, literacy and special educational needs, have made a significant contribution to the school's success. They play a full and vital role in checking the quality of teaching in their respective areas and in supporting pupils' progress. They look at assessment information and the work in pupils' books, and talk to pupils about their learning. This helps them determine how well pupils are progressing and where the strengths and areas for improvement lie. These leaders undertake training to ensure that their leadership skills and subject knowledge remain up to date. They also lead training for colleagues in school and within the trust. They contribute well to the school's capacity to drive further improvement.

- About a quarter of the pupils in the school are disadvantaged but all make good progress due to the good or better teaching they receive. However, although disadvantaged pupils do as well as other pupils nationally, they do not do as well as other pupils in the school. Attainment gaps remain between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school and have widened. You are aware of the need to use the additional funding to close the gaps that remain in the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils in the school
- school attendance continues to rise, ensuring rapid improvement for some groups, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs
- the teaching of spelling and writing is consistently good and ensures that pupils become fluent writers.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for the London borough of Bexley. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the headteacher of the school, the school business manager and subject leaders. I also met with a group of governors and spoke to the school improvement partner by telephone. Together, you and I visited classes, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books. My colleague also visited the breakfast club, classes and intervention sessions, undertaking some observations jointly with the headteacher of the school. She looked at the work in pupils' books and met with a group of pupils. She observed pupils at playtime and spoke to parents as they brought their children to school and whilst attending a parent learning workshop. She also met with the head of the early years provision and the leader of special educational needs. Documents and records relating to pupils' achievement, teaching, attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised during the inspection. The school improvement plan and leaders' own evaluation of performance were also taken into account. The inspection team considered the views of 56 parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 18 questionnaires completed by members of staff.