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6 April 2016

Margaret Barrington  
Headteacher  
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Dear Margaret Barrington

### **Short inspection of Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School**

Following my visit to the school on 16 March 2016 with Shelley Davies, 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 July 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The focus on sustaining high standards of attainment in English and mathematics has not diminished. This is because teachers and staff have a clear understanding of the school's vision of high expectations. Since the previous inspection, you and other senior leaders, including the governors, have made further improvements to sustaining the high standards. You all use the information on pupils' performance very well to develop supportive systems to help them overcome potential barriers to their learning.

You have all ensured that the increase in the number of pupils on roll, and expansion of the school premises, did not affect the emphasis on learning. Staff work effectively, feel valued and listened to and there is commitment to developing the school further. They understand and accept the culture of continual improvement. This, along with the ethos of openness, has led to you all accepting and acting on the external and critical reviews of the school's effectiveness to improve outcomes in mathematics, and for groups of pupils such as those who are disadvantaged and the most able. This is to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils in the school, and the most able achieve the highest level possible. As a result, pupils are making better progress in the current school year. Improvements made are also linked to the many opportunities staff have to develop their teaching skills and work together as a team to improve practice and develop planning.

Areas for improvement, identified in the previous inspection report, have been successfully rectified. Nevertheless, you and other senior leaders are using the development plan to maintain an even sharper focus on some of the previous areas for improvement. These include teaching, progress and assessment. The key priorities in the development plan have been carefully deliberated. Middle leaders and other staff are working with you and the governing body to ensure that the priorities are implemented and developed so that all groups of pupils can make even better progress, particularly in mathematics. The attention now given to scrutinising assessment is far more rigorous. As a result, staff are better informed about pupils' rates of progress and the approaches needed to enable pupils to make rapid progress. Developments, including the key priorities, are carefully linked to current changes nationally: for example, increasing pupils' ability to master and apply specific skills, developing their vocabulary and reading skills to interpret questions accurately, and developing a clear system to assess pupils' progress.

Together, you and other senior leaders, including the governors, have ensured that the changes made underpin teaching and are not seen as 'one-off' events. You have astutely used training and development opportunities, together with a range of moderation activities, to make sure that teachers' assessment of pupils' work is accurate. You have used these events very well to keep staff alert so that their skills are constantly sharpened and recognised beyond the school. In addition, every member of staff has a responsibility. This has increased accountability for pupils' achievement, as well as their experience and expertise. Consequently, your staff are receptive to critical reviews and there is no complacency to the findings that not all pupils made rapid progress. This has propelled middle leaders to carry out in-depth analyses of pupils' progress. They have identified gaps in learning and found different resources and approaches to tackling misconceptions when planning and consolidating concepts.

Following the previous inspection, you have expanded opportunities for pupils to: 'build and take ownership of their learning', develop leadership skills as champions, and become mediators and mentors for younger pupils at key stage 1. Additionally, the curriculum has been used well to expand pupils' knowledge and understanding about other communities beyond their vicinity. Project and community work has increased their understanding of the next stage of their education and given them a mature grasp of what it means to be tolerant in a diverse society.

As a school, you work very well with parents and most who took part in the on line survey are very positive about your work with their children.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The systems for child protection and safeguarding pupils are thorough. Staff are well briefed and trained so that they are up to date with the latest guidance. For example, they are familiar with the Department for Education guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (July 2015). You and other senior leaders ensure that all staff read this document. Senior staff with responsibility for safeguarding regularly extend their understanding of safeguarding training, and are well equipped to advise and support staff, and act as trainers and counsellors. This continuous

approach to training covers national priorities and guidance on, for example, extremism, radicalisation, female genital mutilation, children missing education and child sexual exploitation.

Governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and keep this aspect of the school's work under close scrutiny. For instance, the safeguarding governor and the chair of the governing body carry out regular checks, including auditing the official document to ensure compliance. In this way, they are well informed and attentive to detail. The school maintains very good chronological records. The organisation and administration of this work is very good and referrals, when necessary, are timely, as are risk assessments.

Parents and their children are overwhelmingly positive about the school being a safe, happy and warm place to attend. Pupils are confident that there is an adult they can turn to if they have worries. However, a few parents and a small minority of pupils who took part in the survey expressed concerns that there is a 'hope that the school will have zero tolerance on bullying', primarily because a few children feel they are bullied. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were clear that bullying incidents are dealt with quickly and decisively and it is not tolerated. They also indicated that it is addressed in circle time, personal and health education and in assemblies. Pupils are aware that bullying is against the values of the school. Exclusions are rare.

Clear systems are in place to track pupils whose attendance falls below the average for primary schools. Effective work with external partners and families, as well as actions taken, have had a direct impact on improving the attendance and punctuality of persistent absentees. Attendance is above average for primary schools.

## **Inspection findings**

- Senior leaders are ambitious for the school and continuously set high targets for its pupils to achieve. The targets for this current academic year are for virtually all pupils to make expected progress. They are aware that not all groups achieved equally well, notably at key stage 1, in 2014/15 where the high standards reached masked the weaker attainment of the few disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, at key stage 2, senior leaders recognise that standards attained in mathematics were not as good as in English; some groups such as the most-able pupils did not achieve the highest level possible. Senior and middle leaders have forensically analysed the test results and identified weaknesses in the skills of the most-able pupils to interpret questions accurately and demonstrate their mastery of mathematical concepts. As a result, there is an increased focus on pupils developing mastery and fluency of key concepts, and reading and interpreting texts and vocabulary accurately.
- The new assessment system is enabling teachers to use different information to track pupils' performance against key indicators. This is helping them to quickly check on individuals and groups and take remedial action if any are not on track to reach their targets. The new assessment

system is being embedded but, as the school explains, the move to a new system has made 'it hard to track progress'. The tendency to focus on attainment and a high percentage of pupils achieving age-related expectations have detracted staff from analysing more closely the rates of progress all groups make, particularly, the most able. This has now changed. There is a sharper focus on pupils' starting points and the progress they make from key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2.

- The school's current assessment information indicates that the attainment gap between minority ethnic groups and other pupils in the school has closed, and most key stage 2 pupils are now making better progress.
- Teachers make good use of assessment procedures to check pupils' progress regularly. Pupils are also very much involved in finding out about their learning journeys and targets. However, not all teachers use the assessment information well to match work to pupils' needs, in particular for the most able. A few parents and pupils indicated that work could be more challenging. Inspectors agree.
- The capacity of leaders at all levels to bring about change is well managed. Senior leaders have taken account of the increasing demands on teachers to keep abreast of changes. As a result, all teachers have a specific responsibility. Additionally, staff have used opportunities to develop their subject expertise and share their skills widely across the borough within the local teaching alliance, as specialist leaders and as best practitioners in the school. Aspiring leaders are also effectively cultivated.
- The continuous focus on developing teaching and learning is linked to the school development plan, the professional development of staff and their personal performance targets. This works well because consideration is given to the needs of individuals, the corporate needs of the school and wider local and national priorities.
- The new early years leader has improved the effectiveness and quality of the early years provision. Very well organised activities, clear questioning and focus on children's learning contribute to them making rapid progress. Children are encouraged to speak out and clearly articulate their views, and cooperate very well with adults and each other.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enthuse about the support provided and all that the school offers them. School councillors act as ambassadors and use their position to influence change such as the development of the playground; they feel listened to and do not shy away from speaking out when they meet with the governors. Pupils appreciate the extra-curricular activities, including the organised events away from the school as well as the community services carried out in school and beyond.
- Parents very much appreciate the provision for pupils with special educational needs or disability provision, which a parent described as a 'nurturing environment'. The school's inclusive and sensitive approach leads to pupils with additional needs being very well incorporated and involved in lessons. This is a particular strength of the school's work and contributes to pupils embracing the concept of tolerance and cooperation towards others who require additional support. For example, as part of Autism Week, Year 4 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of what it means to be autistic. Their comments underpin their view that the school treats all pupils equally

well: 'Our differences make us who we are, that's why we are friends; no one cares if you are different, it does not mean you are treated differently...' This demonstrates pupils' mature understanding of what it means to live in a diverse community.

- Most parents value the quality of learning at the school and all that it offers to their child; as one parent commented, 'Children are shown the joy of learning.' This is a view that the school council endorses.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new assessment system helps staff to gain a thorough knowledge and understanding of pupils' starting points to enable them to make much better progress over time
- teachers consistently develop and plan challenging activities that extend and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding
- staff develop a greater understanding of how to use information about pupils' performance to spot trends and patterns so that support can be swiftly targeted to maximise pupils' achievement.

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 Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met middle leaders and a newly qualified teacher. They took into consideration 32 responses to the staff questionnaire. Meetings were also held with the chair of the governing body and another governor and the school improvement partner from the local authority. Inspectors evaluated the parental responses to the online questioners and the free text. The inspectors met with two groups of pupils, and evaluated the 86 responses to the online pupil questionnaire. A range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, progress tracking information and evidence of safeguarding arrangements, were reviewed, as well as external reviews of the school's work. Short visits were made to lessons, where the inspectors spoke to pupils and scrutinised their work.