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Mrs Elizabeth Benjeddi
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Dear Mrs Benjeddi

Short inspection of South Green Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 10 November 2016, 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You joined the school as deputy headteacher in September 2012. In April 2013, the headteacher was seconded to the local authority part time. You became acting headteacher for three days a week until September 2014, when this was extended to full time. The headteacher left the school in December 2014 and you were subsequently appointed as the substantive headteacher in March 2015. During this time, you put in place temporary senior leadership arrangements and, in September 2015, you appointed your current deputy headteacher. Alongside these significant changes, a number of teachers left the school, and several that joined were in the early stages of their teaching career. You were previously the leader for English, which the deputy headteacher has now taken on. The mathematics subject leader has also changed since the previous inspection. Membership of the governing body has also changed, with a new chair taking up her position three years ago.

You and your senior leaders work extremely well together, complementing each other's skills well. Your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs improvement is accurate. Since your appointment you have rightly prioritised and are committed to ensuring that all teaching is at least good. There are numerous examples throughout the school of the high expectations that you set about 'how we want to be at South Green Junior'. You have developed the skills of

middle leaders so that they fully understand the part they play in whole-school improvement and, as a result, the walls are adorned with good-quality work in, for example, art, history and geography. The school's mantra is 'Achievement for All'; you and your effective team build pupils' confidence to approach their work with the mindset that they 'can do that' and not to give up. One parent said that her child 'responds very well to the encouragement she receives from staff'. Pupils say that South Green Junior school is 'amazing' and that 'lessons are always packed with excitement and adventure'.

At the previous inspection the school was asked to improve pupils' achievement. You and your team have ensured that this has remained a priority. The attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 from 2012 to 2015 was significantly above the national average. In 2016, pupils achieved above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of pupils in 2016 was also above the national average in writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils did not all do as well as they could in 2016. This group of pupils currently in the school, however, are making good progress, including those who are most able. You recognise that progress in reading was not as good as it could be for all pupils and have prioritised this important area for development.

You have already improved the reading lessons, some of which were seen during the inspection. Adults work well with groups of pupils to increase their vocabulary and understanding. Pupils enjoy reading, benefit from reading to adult volunteers, and clearly enjoy 'getting right into a book' in the inviting reading corners. Those who I heard read were able to tell me what they liked about their current book and how they find out about words with which they are unfamiliar. We saw how the development of this area is beginning to be seen in pupils' writing. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that pupils achieve the best they can. The writing project that you have put in place is beginning to bear fruit. You and your leaders agree, however, that teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and to practise some of the techniques and language they are learning in their revitalised reading lessons.

You have worked hard to establish the accuracy of assessment information and ensure that progress for pupils is correctly identified. Tracking of pupils' progress is well developed. As a result, pupils who are at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and appropriate support is put in place. Your senior leaders and I looked closely at pupils' work in their books from this and last year. Current pupils are making at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. There was also evidence of many exceeding expected progress, including the most vulnerable pupils in the school. We agreed that there is still a need for further challenge at all levels within some classes, particularly for the most-able pupils. Pupils told me that sometimes their work has not been challenging enough and that they would like it to be harder, particularly in mathematics.

In the previous inspection report, the school was also asked to develop the consistency of teaching and learning. You have put in place good support and guidance to develop all of your staff. Learning seen during this inspection confirms

that you have some very good examples of teachers challenging pupils to extend their learning. Pupils could choose the bronze, silver or gold, or A, B or C challenge in some classes, many opting for the hardest. One pupil who opted for the middle challenge said, 'A is too easy, C may be too hard, so I thought I would try B as it is the first time we have done this work.' In every lesson pupils were able to say what they were learning and how they would know that they were successful in their learning. One pupil who was problem-solving in mathematics articulately explained the three steps he would go through, involving addition, subtraction and multiplication, to solve this complicated problem. Another explained that 'we use colons when we write the time, like 14:20, rather than 14.20, as time is not in 10s, it's in 60s and a dot represents decimals'.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. School leaders and governors ensure that robust procedures for the safety and well-being of all pupils are applied with rigour. Training for all staff and governors in safeguarding is regular and fully up to date, the latest being in September 2016. You are meticulous in your checking that all staff attend this training and rigorously follow up with subsequent training if anyone has missed out on this important aspect. School policies are reviewed annually to reflect the latest government guidance including about the risks of extremism.

You are the designated leader with responsibility for child protection. You work very closely with staff from other agencies when any safeguarding concerns arise. The vigilance of your staff has undoubtedly ensured the safety of the most vulnerable pupils, as records clearly indicated. These records are of very high quality and document clearly what actions have been taken in a well-maintained chronology of events. The progress of the most vulnerable pupils is, therefore, monitored very closely to ensure that their needs are fully met.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. There are numerous posters, some designed by pupils, to remind all pupils of the responsibility they play in keeping themselves and others safe. For example, in the corridors there are displays about speaking out against bullying, staying safe online, 'showing racism the red card' and who to go to if there is a safeguarding concern. Pupils say that any incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are rare and if they do happen they are dealt with quickly. Inspection evidence seen during my visit confirms this to be so. Although some parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that behaviour and bullying incidents were not always addressed, the inspection evidence from a variety of sources, including pupils themselves, does not confirm this. You and your team are committed and determined to ensure that all pupils feel safe at school. Such initiatives as the play leader scheme support this work, requiring play leaders to 'help keep the playground a safe and happy place to play'. Work in lessons on morals seen during the inspection, 'to treat others how you want to be treated' ensures that the caring ethos is all-pervasive. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View say that their children are happy, safe and enjoy coming to school. Inspection evidence confirms this to be so, supported by your own surveys conducted during well-attended parents' evenings this week.

The school's website is compliant, giving good information to parents about safeguarding, support, and celebration of achievements, including for example, fundraising activities for children who are less fortunate or ill.

Support from the local authority has been appropriate, given the judgement at the previous inspection. You have proactively sought advice and support from the local authority when necessary, including regarding child protection, legal queries and governance. You and your governors have also secured support and challenge from other professionals, including when conducting the performance management of your role.

Inspection findings

- Much work has been undertaken to ensure that teaching is constantly improved. You have put in place support and guidance to try to ensure that pupils are able to achieve the best they can in all classes.
- The majority of teachers ensure that pupils are challenged, using a variety of techniques that you and your staff have worked on, such as questioning. However, work is not always sufficiently challenging and so not all of the most-able pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Pupil attainment has been significantly above the national average since the previous inspection and until 2015. In 2016, attainment was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress was also above average except in reading, and in particular for the middle-attaining pupils. The progress in reading of pupils currently in the school is inconsistent.
- Tracking of pupils' progress and attainment is rigorous and regular. Very few pupils are not making the expected progress, and many are exceeding expected progress. This includes those pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Work scrutiny carried out during the inspection shows that pupils are making good progress in mathematics, with very good examples of teachers challenging pupils to think hard about their work. Pupils' work in their writing books shows that the vast majority of pupils make expected and in some cases more than expected progress. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and to practise their language skills in their writing. As a consequence, pupils are not able to show what they are capable of in their writing.
- Improvement planning identifies strengths and weaknesses and what the school is doing about the development of key priorities. Work has been undertaken with external support to ensure that middle and senior leaders understand the part they play in whole-school improvement. Each has a clear action plan and carries out regular monitoring of their area of responsibility. As a result, subjects like history, art and geography are well developed across the school.
- Governors work well with leaders to ensure that they carry out their statutory responsibilities. Safeguarding is effective and well monitored by governors. They take this area of the school's work very seriously, for example by sending letters to any parent who takes their child out of school during term time or whose child does not attend regularly. Governors check on the use of additional funding to

support disadvantaged pupils; however, they do not track well enough pupils' progress in comparison with pupils nationally from similar starting points.

- The majority of parents are very supportive of the school's leaders and the work that they do. Parent surveys support this. Some parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that pupils' behaviour is not good enough and that there is some evidence of bullying. Inspection findings support leaders' evaluation of behaviour as being good. Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is very little bullying or poor behaviour, and if there is, it is limited to one or two pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers improve pupils' progress in reading, by developing their vocabulary and understanding
- most-able pupils currently in the school are given work that enables them to make the best progress they can in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length and to use their developing language skills in their writing
- governors track more closely, the progress of disadvantaged pupils from their different starting points and compare their progress with similar pupils nationally
- partnership with parents is further developed so that the part they play in contributing to their children's learning is maximised.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Brock
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and leader for mathematics. I also met with three members of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I reviewed a wide range of documentation including policies, attendance information, monitoring of teaching and learning, parent surveys undertaken by the school, and governing body minutes. Together with your senior leaders, we looked at numerous examples of pupils' work in their English and mathematics books from the last and this academic year. With you, I observed learning in every class. A thorough examination of the school's safeguarding arrangements was undertaken with you and your office staff. I held a discussion with a group of 10 pupils and with various pupils during their lessons, and I listened to some pupils read. I also reviewed

parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text messages.

Key lines of enquiry for this inspection

- Progress since the previous inspection including how the school has improved pupils' achievement and developed the consistency of teaching and learning.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding.
- How well governors hold leaders to account for the use of the additional funding to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils.
- How effective the leadership of reading is in ensuring that all pupils make the best progress they can.