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8 February 2017

Cal Shaw
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Shaw

Short inspection of Stroud Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 February 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Interim leadership arrangements were put in place at the start of the summer term in 2016 when the previous headteacher left. Your deputy headteacher became acting headteacher with support from an executive headteacher. This arrangement quickly became very effective in reversing a decline at that point in pupils' achievement, particularly in reading.

Since your appointment in January 2017, you have swiftly built on the secure foundations they put in place. You have quickly established an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. Leaders systematically gather accurate performance information enabling you to identify where teachers need more training and which pupils need more support.

The governing body is effective in challenging leaders to improve the school's performance. This is particularly so since it has gained more accurate information so it can understand clearly why pupils' progress fell and what needed to be done to rectify this.

The school has become much more outward looking. It is reaping the benefits of close partnerships with other schools. Teachers have learned much through visits to observe some of the high-quality practice in these schools. This is having a major impact on strengthening the quality of teachers' practice. As a result, teaching is improving rapidly and pupils' progress is back to being good, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

However, these changes did not have enough time to have significant impact on pupils' outcomes in the 2016 statutory assessments. Results fell in several areas, and particularly so in reading. The rapid improvement in teaching has reversed this decline across the school. Teachers say they have a renewed sense of purpose in their work and greatly value the chance you are giving them to become even better practitioners. They also feel better trained and so are able to prepare pupils to reach the standard required in the national assessments.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection are now being tackled head on. Pupils take great care over the presentation of their work, including their handwriting. This high standard is consistent throughout the school. Pupils have also become less reliant on teachers' instructions and are becoming skilled at finding things out for themselves.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. Monitoring by leaders, governors and the local authority show that policies are being rigorously implemented. Training ensures that teachers and support staff remain vigilant. The safeguarding lead has developed a strong culture through role-play activities where staff will 'think the unthinkable'.

School leaders know families well and thus can target support or action swiftly and carefully. Vulnerabilities are identified and cases causing concern are rigorously tracked. Leaders are very vigilant when pupils might have gone missing from education and check carefully the whereabouts of any absentees and leavers.

Parents are strongly of the view that the school looks after their children and keeps them safe. They are confident that any bullying or other unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. School records confirm this. Pupils are happy in school and say how safe they feel. They are very clear about how to identify and avoid risks. This includes when searching the internet or using social media.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, assessments for Year 6 pupils indicated that progress in reading had slowed and was below the national average. However, the rapid action taken by school leaders has reversed this decline. Pupils are now making good progress in reading, their attainment is rising, and many are becoming very enthusiastic readers.
- Interim school leadership quickly introduced a rigorous programme of training for the teaching of reading. This means teachers are better prepared for the demands of the new national curriculum. Close links with an outstanding school have enabled teachers to reflect on how they can adapt their teaching so it supports pupils to develop the reading skills expected for their age. These links

have also helped the new subject leader develop the necessary skills to support the drive for improvement.

- Visits to lessons show that teachers now use high-quality texts to teach key reading skills such as inference and deduction. For example, we observed Year 5 pupils identifying how the writer of a complex piece of text had used figurative language and what it meant to the reader.
- Your assessment information shows that improvements to the teaching of reading are having a clear impact on pupils' outcomes. More pupils than previously are at the standard expected for their age across the school. The proportion of pupils who are exceeding the expected standard is also rising. Your assessment information indicates that the current Year 6 pupils have made good progress in their reading over key stage 2. The number of Year 6 pupils who are on track to reach the expected standard is higher than when they were assessed at the end of key stage 1. This is also the case in Year 2, with more pupils now on track to meet the expected standard compared with when they were assessed at the end of Reception.
- You have identified that pupils do not always use their newly acquired reading skills to extend their writing. Our scrutiny of their books confirmed this view, although, overall, pupils' progress is still good. Looking at their writing books also showed that they are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop the stamina to write at length.
- Assessment information for 2016 indicated that disadvantaged pupils were not making good progress when compared with other pupils nationally. Leaders and governors identified that this was partly linked to a general decline in the quality of teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress now that teaching is good and improving. The rigorous interrogation of assessment information enables you and your teachers to spot where further support is needed to address any gaps in their learning. Many disadvantaged pupils attend daily booster classes before school, which further enhances their progress. Easter revision classes are planned to provide further closely targeted support for these pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress across the school. Any differences in attainment with other pupils nationally are small and diminishing quickly. This includes in phonics and across key stage 1. Here, pupils who left the Reception class working below age-related expectations are catching up quickly. A much greater proportion are now acquiring the skills and understanding expected for their age.
- During my visit, I looked at the impact of your action to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. Leaders have put in place rigorous and effective systems to reduce absence, including working very closely with the local authority's education welfare service.
- You have identified which families need additional support to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Meetings with these families have helped to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. Many have responded well to this, so attention can now be focused on families in more challenging

circumstances. As a result, attendance has risen and persistent absence has fallen sharply. This is the case for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils routinely apply their improved reading skills to help them develop their writing in greater depth
- pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop greater stamina to write at length and for sustained periods.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- I met you and your deputy headteacher, as well as other members of staff with leadership responsibilities. I met three governors, including the chair. I also had a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- You accompanied me when I visited classrooms. I also observed pupils as they moved around the school. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' English books with you. I met with two groups of pupils and heard three pupils read. I took account of the 105 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- I considered the school's analysis of pupils' recent performance. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe and records of training and safeguarding checks.