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Mrs Rani Karim
Headteacher
Sir John Heron Primary School
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Dear Mrs Karim

Short inspection of Sir John Heron Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 your school was judged to be good in November 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 have set high expectations for what pupils can achieve and you provide clear direction for the school's future improvement, based upon the school's core values. The culture of the school is demonstrated by the way you successfully integrate your pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties into the main part of the school. The school's core values emphasise the importance of every child in the school community and how the school can best support all pupils. All members of staff understand your vision and demonstrate these values in their work.

You have created a leadership team that is determined to do the best for all the pupils in the school. Together, you have led the improvements in the quality of teaching that were identified in the last report. You have ensured that progress in mathematics is as good as that in English and you have supported governors to help them become more effective in undertaking their roles and responsibilities. You have also improved the curriculum so that pupils enjoy their learning. For example in mathematics, pupils have many more opportunities to develop their reasoning. The focus on 'Book Week', involving parents, is emphasising the importance of reading.

In 2016, the provisional outcomes information showed that progress in reading

and writing for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was low. Our learning walk and analysis of most recent school information confirmed that, as a result of an emphasis on improving teaching, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress.

Your pupils are very proud of the school. They believe this is a good school because of the opportunities the school provides for more disadvantaged pupils. You have created an environment where they are safe and can thrive. They behave well in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. The children demonstrate independence from an early age in their choice of activities. Your peer mediators help to resolve minor issues between other pupils in order to ensure that behaviour is as good as it can be.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders ensure that everyone at the school has collective responsibility to keep pupils safe and all staff understand that. The safeguarding and outreach manager leads on safeguarding. You and the deputy headteacher are the designated safeguarding leads. Working closely with other leaders and the learning mentor, the safeguarding manager makes sure that all statutory requirements are met and that all children are safe. For example, checks on visitors are rigorous and pupils are aware of keeping themselves safe from a wide range of potential dangers, including cyber bullying. Recent building work reinforced the school's safety practices, so that all pupils knew what to do in the event of a fire.

The school's business manager makes sure that all pre-employment checks are rigorously undertaken and, each term, the governor linked to safeguarding monitors the school's practice. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. All staff receive child protection training, at the appropriate level, which is updated regularly. As a result, staff have a thorough understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry focused on the actions taken to ensure that pupils make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Senior leaders model effective leadership skills, including how to use a range of information to improve the work of the school. For example, they have used the assessments from 2016 to identify priorities for this year. This includes a greater focus on pupils exceeding national expectations in core subjects and ensuring most-able pupils do well. Leaders check that all teachers carry out all of the school's requirements for teaching and learning through observations and work sampling. The performance of each pupil is looked at carefully so that leaders can check whether pupils are making sufficient progress. Consequently, leaders track pupils' progress well. However, there are some inconsistencies in the expectations of some teachers, as shown in pupils' books where their learning is not stretched.
 - Staff intervene at the earliest opportunity to ensure that pupils' progress improves even further. The school has demonstrated a strong emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups and for all pupils. New programmes of work have been introduced to improve learning in both English and mathematics. Additional clubs have been established, for example, the 'Brilliant Club', and 'Hots Club', which extends the reasoning skills of the most able pupils. The school makes sure that the needs of pupils are met as early as possible, followed by putting in place the right actions to meet those needs.
 - Pupils in Year 6 who read to me, read well and with expression. They read from a wide variety of texts. They can talk with confidence about their books. They use different strategies when reading an unfamiliar word. For example, a pupil was sufficiently confident to pronounce the word 'chic' correctly but knew to use contextual clues to help him if necessary. Most-able disadvantaged pupils read with confidence and fluency.
 - My second line of enquiry considered the outcomes for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is a greater emphasis on the needs of specific groups such as the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, most pupils' books show that they make good progress over time.
 - The recently introduced system for tracking the progress of pupils is helping the safeguarding and outreach manager to ensure that the needs of pupils are well met. This is supported by the school's most recent assessments which show that most pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, given their starting points and capabilities.
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- In Nursery, many children arrive with skills that are below expectations for

their age, particularly in language and communication and personal development. Staff ensure that children practise their early reading, writing and mathematical skills, including by support from older pupils. The school understands the importance of the early identification of needs. As a result, throughout the early years, good support from adults provides a range of opportunities for children to develop their early reading and writing skills. This is enabling children to be more independent and confident.

- Pupils in key stage 1 are challenged to make good progress. The organisation of the learning helps most-able pupils and those who have learning difficulties to do well. For example, the use of practical apparatus helps pupils better understand how to add or to solve fractions. The most able pupils are challenged through tasks set and extension activities. However, although most-able pupils understand how to solve fraction problems, they are less confident in knowing their multiplication tables. Attainment measures show that pupils in key stage 1 who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2, apart from in reading, broadly match the national picture. The proportion of pupils that met the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 and achieved a good level of development in the early years was above the national figure. However, too few pupils achieved the expected level in reading at the end of Year 6, resulting in below-average attainment in all subjects combined.
- My third line of enquiry focused on the actions leaders have taken to reduce levels of pupils' absence. The school has in place a full range of strategies that are continuing to improve attendance. Your work with families and other agencies has led to improvement over time for some pupils. However, attendance for some pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, is too low.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- overall attendance continues to improve so it is at least in line with national levels for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils
- more robust monitoring and interventions result in outcomes improving, particularly in reading and for most-able pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Newham.

Yours sincerely

Richard Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other senior leaders, middle leaders and support staff. I met with members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation and the school's website, including the school's self-evaluation of its own performance, school improvement plan, school policies, information on the progress of pupils and the single central record. I spoke informally to a number of pupils, listened to pupils read and visited all year groups in the school in order to gather evidence on particular aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.