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Mrs Lesley Julian
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Dear Mrs Julian

Short inspection of The Cedars Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 June 2017 with Rosemarie McCarthy, 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 outstanding in June 2014.

This school continues to be outstanding.

The leadership team has maintained the outstanding quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is a welcoming and inspiring community, underpinned by your passion to secure the very best outcomes for pupils. Leaders and staff are equally committed to providing pupils with the highest standard of education. Together, you work as a cohesive team to achieve this goal. Governors contribute well to your efforts to drive further improvements through a careful balance of support and challenge.

Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils at the school has increased. Pupils placed at the school typically have a more complex range of needs than in the past. You have responded to these changes successfully. Leaders and staff ensure that pupils' emotional and social needs are fully catered for without diminishing their high expectations for pupils' achievement in their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Typically, pupils join the school with low starting points. In part, because they have missed long periods of school and consequently have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Excellent teaching enables pupils to make up lost ground quickly. All groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve equally well, irrespective of their needs or starting points. Carefully selected resources together with challenging activities reflect you and your team's high aspirations. As one pupil put it: 'The best thing about this school is all the different things teachers do to help us with our work.' This accurately captures the strong culture of learning that permeates the school.

Together with your staff, you have created a warm and nurturing atmosphere throughout the school. Well-established routines and teachers' consistent guidance ensure that pupils feel secure and understand what is expected of them. Staff are suitably trained in behaviour management, and step in calmly and efficiently to support pupils in behaving sensibly and safely. You and your team's in-depth knowledge of individual pupils means incidents of challenging or inappropriate behaviour are managed without a fuss. You are rightly proud that no pupils have been excluded from the school.

Close partnerships with parents and carers strengthen your work to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress. Parents appreciate the work of staff to help their children enjoy school and to feel well cared for.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that record-keeping is detailed and of high quality. Pupils feel safe at school because they receive outstanding care and guidance from staff. They are confident that adults will listen sensitively to their concerns and help them when they need it.

Regular training means staff are knowledgeable about different risks to pupils' welfare, including female genital mutilation and the dangers of being drawn into extremism. Leaders ensure that school procedures and staff training take into account the complex needs of pupils who attend the school. Staff are vigilant to any changes in pupils' behaviour or circumstances. They recognise the importance of reporting all concerns so that leaders build a comprehensive picture of potential risks to pupils' safety and well-being. As a result, leaders identify vulnerable pupils at the earliest possible stage and act quickly to provide them with suitable help and protection.

Equally, leaders work sensitively with families to inform their decision-making about how best to support and protect pupils. Leaders involve external agencies promptly, including the early help service, to ensure that extra support is tailored to pupils' needs. Where appropriate, leaders challenge the input provided by external agencies to ensure that pupils are safeguarded effectively.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry considered the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting pupils' needs and preparing them for the next stage of their education. Inspectors found that you and your staff have developed an exceptional curriculum. The curriculum enables pupils to flourish in their personal development and to make excellent progress in their basic skills.
- School assessment information shows that pupils typically join the school with communication and social skills considerably below those expected for their age. You have rightly ensured that the curriculum gives due prominence to helping pupils develop the skills they need to learn and play together well. Carefully planned activities to strengthen pupils' social and communication skills are interwoven seamlessly throughout the school day. For example, pupils learn how to share resources, take turns and be considerate of others' views. Teachers are quick to spot

pupils who struggle, and provide extra help so they do not give up or lose interest. You encourage teachers to try out new approaches so that pupils build quickly on their existing skills. As a result, pupils develop confidence in their own abilities and see themselves as successful learners.

- Pupils' substantial progress in their personal development provides an excellent foundation for their learning in all curriculum subjects. During our visits to classes, pupils were focused on activities and were keen to do their best. Adults continually reinforce communication skills by providing pupils with frequent opportunities to discuss their ideas. Pupils listen to their peers respectfully and encourage each other with their learning. Similarly, teachers strengthen pupils' language skills by encouraging them to speak in full sentences and to use ambitious vocabulary.
- Ensuring that 'every child is a reader' is at the heart of your vision for the curriculum. Leaders and staff share your aim, as the high-quality teaching of reading shows. Well-chosen texts capture pupils' interests and excite them about reading. Excellent phonics teaching ensures that pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need to read and write confidently. Teachers are quick to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge and provide support to address these gaps. Equally, teachers' effective questioning helps pupils to deepen their understanding of the books they read. As a result, pupils make strong progress in their phonics and reading skills.
- At the same time, you and your staff ensure that the curriculum promotes pupils' positive attitudes to reading. Pupils were in agreement about how much they enjoy reading and told inspectors that they read regularly for pleasure.
- Pupils' progress in their writing and spelling skills are also very strong, in part because they have the necessary phonics knowledge to record their ideas accurately. Teachers' in-depth subject knowledge ensures that they explain the learning clearly so pupils know how to be successful in their writing.
- Together with leaders, you have recently adapted the mathematics curriculum to ensure that pupils make swift gains in their arithmetic skills and deepen their understanding of key concepts. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is typically strong. Nevertheless, there is more work to do to embed this approach fully so pupils' achievement in mathematics is as substantial as it is in English.
- The second line of enquiry for this inspection explored how effectively leaders and teachers use assessment information to check that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress from their starting points.
- Inspectors found that leaders and teachers use a wide range of effective strategies to check that pupils learn and achieve well. Teachers effectively monitor pupils' understanding as they are teaching. They are quick to adapt activities so pupils complete tasks that are well matched to their needs and abilities. Leaders and teachers constantly review assessment information to identify pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning. You ensure that no time is lost in providing these pupils with extra help so that they do not fall behind.
- Rigorous assessment procedures extend to how you track pupils' behaviour. Pupils benefit from bespoke behaviour goals which measure their small steps in progress. Leaders and teachers review goals frequently so pupils move on to more challenging targets as soon as they are ready. Pupils are involved closely in monitoring their own

behaviour. For example, they choose personalised rewards from the 'school shop'. This motivates pupils to achieve their goals.

- Many pupils join the school with a history of poor attendance. Therefore, my final line of enquiry evaluated leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance rates.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school has a clear impact on reducing absence rates. They are keen to attend school so they do not miss valuable learning. Very few pupils are persistently absent. Staff monitor pupils' attendance rigorously and follow up concerns without delay. Close partnerships with families and external agencies help leaders to analyse why individual pupils are not attending school as often as they should. This enables the school to provide additional support that is well-targeted to their circumstances.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- mathematics teaching stretches pupils' understanding and skills appropriately so that pupils' progress is as substantial and sustained as that found in other areas of their learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Murphy-Dutton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors visited classes together with you and senior leaders. Inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and reviewed work in pupils' books. They held meetings with you, the leadership team and members of the governing body to evaluate the quality of education the school provides. A range of school documentation was scrutinised including leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, plans for improvement and assessment information. Documentation related to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour was also scrutinised and discussed with leaders. This included records of child protection concerns and checks carried out to ensure that adults are suitable to work in the school. Inspectors listened to pupils read and a group of pupils gave an inspector a tour of the school. No responses were received to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors gathered the views of staff through formal and informal discussions. The 15 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey were also reviewed. Inspectors considered the views of parents through a meeting at the start of the school day. The responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, were also taken into account.