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Mrs Hayley Durrant
Headteacher
The James Oglethorpe Primary School
Ashvale Gardens
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Dear Mrs Durrant

Short inspection of The James Oglethorpe Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2018, 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 June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

Since the previous inspection, weaknesses in leadership were identified by the school's governors. With the support of the local authority, they took swift and effective action leading to your appointment, supported by a new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.

You have brought about considerable change at the school, which has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. You have created an ethos within which all staff are motivated and supported to develop their particular skills. Parents and carers, staff and pupils respect the work you have done. Comments from parents show their appreciation of the changes and improvements made since your appointment. One parent said, 'There is an air of excitement'; and another said that the school is 'going places'.

The school has worked hard to address the action points from the previous inspection report. Teachers give pupils clear guidance on how to make their work better, and this is proving very helpful in ensuring that pupils, particularly the most able, make good progress. Notably, an increasing proportion of pupils are achieving the higher standard in end of key stage tests, particularly in mathematics. Pupils take great pride in their work, behave well and try their best. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils' progress, encouraging them not to give up by helping them to overcome any difficulty they may have. This enables pupils to keep trying even when they find the work challenging.

As a result, pupils in the school are making strong progress in reading, writing and

mathematics. Even so, leaders know that there is more to do to raise the attainment of pupils in writing, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils, to that of their peers nationally. You have identified strategies to achieve this and are implementing planned actions to improve the range and quality of pupils' writing.

Governors are knowledgeable and involved in the work of the school. They offer you strong strategic support and are willing to challenge your decisions in order to promote the very best standard of education for pupils. Leaders, including governors, understand that they need to ensure that attendance continues to improve, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are knowledgeable and clear about their roles and responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. They appreciate the regular training and 'refreshers' that they receive. Governors understand their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and visit the school regularly to ensure that safeguarding practice is effective. Recruitment processes and practice are robust. Leaders are proactive in encouraging staff to share any concerns. Response to concerns is appropriate and timely, working well with external agencies.

Pupils said that they feel safe and all pupils questioned said that they know whom to talk to if they have a concern. One pupil said that the school is 'friendly and happy'. The pupils spoken to said that bullying is rare but are confident that, if it did occur, the staff 'would sort it out straight away'.

Inspection findings

- For the first line of enquiry, we agreed to look at the progress of middle-attaining boys and disadvantaged pupils in writing in key stage 2. This is because these pupils did not progress as well as other pupils in 2017. You have rightly identified this as a priority and have put appropriate actions in place to address it.
- You have developed a more structured approach to the teaching of writing, which has improved the quality of teaching and learning. The subject leader appreciates the additional training and support that she has been given and, as a result, she has enabled staff to develop their expertise. Pupils said that they enjoy their writing lessons and find them challenging. We saw that teachers and teaching assistants are providing intensive small-group work effectively in key stage 2 to respond to pupils' needs and improve their performance.
- Our scrutiny of pupils' writing and a review of current assessment information provided us with compelling evidence that these groups of pupils are now making good progress. However, we agreed that this would have to be sustained to ensure that more middle-attaining and disadvantaged pupils reach the expected standard.
- The second line of enquiry was to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's actions in improving the progress of boys and disadvantaged pupils in reading.

We chose this because boys and disadvantaged pupils did not progress as well as other pupils in the school in 2017.

- You have developed a strong reading ethos in the school and are ensuring that pupils read widely and often in school and at home. High-quality and responsive teaching in the early years is ensuring that children make rapid progress in reading in their first term in school. The highly structured phonics approach is also ensuring that Year 1 pupils' progress is rapid. Pupils who are falling behind in reading are identified quickly and are provided with good-quality, structured interventions in order to help them to catch up. The development of two libraries, with the support of the parent community, is further boosting the school's reading ethos.
- As a result, as shown by the school's assessments and our own observations, boys and disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress in reading. The pupils who read to me said that they enjoy the reading books available to them. They are confident readers, developing fluency and drawing on a range of strategies to tackle more tricky words. Pupils told me that they know how to select an appropriate book independently. The home-school reading diaries are used well, enabling parents and teachers to share their views about the child's progress, engagement and enjoyment. However, we agreed that the reading areas in some classrooms could be made even more engaging in order to complement the drive to improve reading.
- For the final line of enquiry, we looked at pupils' attendance. This is because, in 2017, boys, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities had higher levels of persistent absenteeism than found nationally.
- The appointment of a new attendance officer has ensured that procedures to tackle poor attendance are more robust. You have used the support of the education welfare officer and other organisations to improve attendance and are not afraid to issue penalties when required. Pupils are encouraged and rewarded for their good attendance. You have built up strong relationships with families. Any concerns are dealt with promptly and followed up through meetings with parents. Families are actively discouraged from taking extended breaks away from school during term time.
- Your actions have resulted in significant reductions in persistent absenteeism for a key group of families since 2016. Although strategies in place are improving attendance overall, we agreed that there is further work to do to ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is as good as that of other pupils nationally and that the school should maintain its focus on this.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- all pupils make consistently good progress in writing in key stage 2 so that more pupils meet the expected standard
- there is a consistent promotion of the school's reading ethos by all staff, reflected

in their classrooms

- strategies to improve pupils' attendance are developed further to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend school as regularly as other 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 Havering. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Helen Morrison
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you and your deputy headteacher. I met with seven governors and a representative from the local authority. I considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including written comments made to Ofsted. You accompanied me on visits to classrooms. I talked to pupils about their learning. I looked at pupils' books and listened to a range of pupils read. I also evaluated a range of school documentation, including school development plans, safeguarding records and information about current pupils' achievement and attendance.