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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs J Ruddick
Headteacher
Manorcroft Primary School
Wesley Drive
Egham
Surrey
TW20 9LX

Dear Mrs Ruddick

Short inspection of Manorcroft Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 September 2013.

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 worked with all your stakeholders, pupils, parents, carers, staff and governors, to formulate and refine a new vision and set out new values for Manorcroft Primary School, based on 'respect, responsibility and resilience'. Of the parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, most would recommend the school to other parents. As one parent commented: 'We are absolutely delighted with the school and all its efforts in its approach to children's learning and well-being.'

You have carefully steered the school through a period of turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection. Together, you and your deputy headteacher have ensured that all staff focus on the learning needs of each pupil. There is a greater emphasis on making sure that any hindrances that may affect pupils' learning are identified and addressed. As a result of the 'barriers to learning survey' you carried out last year with pupils, you are now able to provide more targeted support for pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils and those who find learning more difficult. This supportive and nurturing environment helps pupils to be successful in their learning.

You know that outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have not been good enough. You have taken decisive action to improve pupils' phonics skills by reorganising the way phonics is taught and making sure that new staff access good-quality training. This is having a positive impact on pupils' ability to use their phonics knowledge to decipher new or unfamiliar words. Currently, a higher proportion of pupils are on track to achieve the expected standard in the phonics

screening check at the end of Year 1 this year.

The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development for the school. School leaders have identified accurately the most important areas for the school to focus on. Governors take an active role in checking whether the actions identified in the school development plan are being addressed effectively. For example, recently, one governor met with the English subject leader with responsibility for phonics to look at the school's assessment information and discuss whether the recently implemented strategies are having a positive effect on outcomes for pupils. Following meetings such as this, governors provide helpful reports to ensure that the whole governing body is appraised of the current situation.

Senior leaders recognise that standards in reading and writing for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been lower than those found nationally in recent years. There is now a greater emphasis on making sure that pupils develop effective early reading skills during their Reception Year. Throughout the school, daily reading lessons and regular comprehension lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to practise their reading skills and fully grasp the meaning behind the texts they read. Pupils are enthusiastic about their reading and enjoy reading for pleasure at home. They are able to name their favourite authors and talk with interest and enthusiasm about the books they read. One pupil provided a compelling synopsis of 'Holes' by Louis Sachar, which he thoroughly enjoyed reading.

Your English subject leaders are fully aware that pupils' early writing skills need to improve more rapidly. They have introduced new strategies for teaching writing and spelling. In the early years, children are encouraged to mark-make and begin to write about their own ideas during their self-initiated activities. Adults scribe stories and model writing to encourage children to 'have a go'. You are fully aware that standards of writing for boys are not as good as for girls. Teachers are now actively engaged in an action research project focusing on improving outcomes for boys in writing. All pupils, including middle-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils, and the most able disadvantaged pupils, are encouraged to talk about their writing and share their ideas together, to stimulate their thinking and develop a love of writing. In addition to this, there is a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work. This is having a positive effect on the progress pupils are making.

Since the previous inspection, you have addressed the identified areas for improvement successfully. Pupils are now much more aware of their own learning, and consider regularly whether they have successfully achieved the learning objectives during lessons. They talk enthusiastically about learning new things, and know that if they find learning difficult, teachers support them to succeed. As one pupil explained: 'Teachers break it down and make it easier to understand.' Parents are also positive about 'the valuable workshops that help them to better understand school practice and how to help at home', although one parent commented that these would be more useful earlier in the school year.

You have also been successful in increasing the skills of senior leaders and subject leaders to enable them to take a more active role in bringing about whole-school improvement. We agreed in our discussion that there is more to be done now to develop the skills of middle leaders, to enable them to be more accountable for improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders place a strong emphasis on making sure that pupils are kept safe from harm. Pupils say they feel safe because there are a lot of adults around to help them. They know that if a situation arose that concerned them, an adult would listen and help them. Pupils learn about keeping safe in a range of situations. They are fully aware of the lock-down procedures and fire drills, and know why such practices take place. They were able to talk in detail about what they would need to do if such an event occurred.

Pupils have a good understanding of a range of different types of bullying, including physical, verbal and cyber bullying. They also have a good understanding of the impact such intimidation has on others. They explained articulately the actions they would take if they experienced any sort of maltreatment. But they were adamant that bullying does not exist at Manorcroft.

School leaders ensure that all the required vetting and recruitment checks are carried out on staff, governors and volunteers. Regular training and updates are provided for everyone to make sure they have a good understanding of their individual responsibilities to keep pupils safe from harm.

Senior leaders monitor pupils' attendance effectively. As a result, the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils has reduced significantly this year. Overall attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. All safeguarding documents and procedures are fit for purpose and successfully implemented.

Inspection findings

- Pupils are keen to learn and to find out new and interesting facts. They have positive attitudes to their learning and work well together in lessons, whether in pairs or in small groups. Relationships are strong. Teachers make sure that the work planned is appropriate for the differing abilities of pupils in their class. They also provide suitable resources and prompts which give an additional layer of support for pupils. Pupils understand that the next steps teachers identify for their learning support them to know what to do to improve their work.
- Interesting and stimulating tasks engage pupils well in lessons. In one Year 6 class, pupils were enthused about recording the evidence they gathered when they witnessed a 'crime scene' just outside their classroom. Effective use of resources and engaging stimuli motivated pupils to report on what they had seen. They were eager to share their writing with their classmates and put forward their ideas about how to solve the crime.

- Pupils have responded well to the improvements made to the teaching of phonics. One group of pupils in Years 1 and 2 was able to confidently and quickly identify common suffixes used in words. Teachers provide helpful rhymes for pupils to use to support their spelling. During one lesson, pupils were able to confidently spell words ending in 'ould' because of the support provided by the teacher.
- Pupils are positive and enthusiastic readers. They enjoy the carousel of activities in reading lessons designed to help them gain a deeper understanding of texts. They also relish the time to sit and listen to their class teacher reading the class novel. One older pupil empathetically described the outline of the story in their class novel 'Wonder' by Raquel Jaramillo, read by her teacher. Pupils recognise that good reading skills and the ability to use dictionaries and thesauruses help them to become more proficient writers.
- Senior leaders evaluate the work of the school accurately and monitor the implementation of new strategies to check on their effectiveness. They carefully track the progress of each pupil in discussions with class teachers, and put additional support in place if pupils are beginning to fall behind. Middle leaders, including phase leaders, are held accountable for the progress of pupils, but, currently, their skills in analysing pupil progress information and identifying effective improvement strategies are underdeveloped.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the skills of middle leaders are developed effectively to enable them to take a more active role in bringing about improvement in their areas of responsibility.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher, your

English subject leaders, seven governors, including the chair of governors, your school business manager, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, external reports, and documentation relating to safeguarding. Pupils' progress in their learning over time was checked by looking at their work in books. Together with you and your deputy headteacher, we observed pupils' learning in eight lessons.