

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 April 2018

Miss Sarah Sands
Headteacher
Garden Suburb Infant School
Childs Way
Hampstead Garden Suburb
London
NW11 6XU

Dear Miss Sands

Short inspection of Garden Suburb Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 17 April 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 January 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are clearly deeply committed to ensuring that the pupils at your school receive the best education possible, and lead the school with kindness and compassion. Together with a hard-working leadership team, you place the pupils at the heart of everything you do.

You have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and where the school needs to improve. Senior leaders are effective and support teachers well in classrooms. This has led to pupils making strong progress in reading and writing. Currently, the school is correctly focused on improving the progress pupils make in mathematics. You and your staff have been seeking to develop pupils' skills of reasoning and understanding in how to apply their knowledge in a variety of situations.

Governors are committed to the school and offer you strong strategic support and significant challenge. Working together, you have ensured that pupils gain a secure grasp of the basic skills expected for their age. All leaders are united in their continued support to ensure that pupils receive the best education.

Since the last inspection, there have been notable improvements in teaching and in the use of feedback to help pupils continue to improve their work. Here, you have ensured that pupils are well taught by teachers who are motivated to do their best. Teachers give pupils sound guidance on how to make their work better. This is proving helpful in ensuring that pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment, make

good progress. Teachers' feedback includes setting pupils a degree of challenge for them to extend their learning. This is proving successful, and increasing numbers of pupils are now achieving the higher standard in the end-of-key-stage tests, particularly in writing.

Teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils' progress. They encourage pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, not to give up on work they find hard, and help them to overcome difficulties.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your leadership team and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are complete. All checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in place. Clear systems exist for staff to make referrals when concerns arise, and subsequent actions are followed up effectively. Leaders work well with families and external agencies to ensure that pupils receive well-targeted support when required. Staff training, including that related to the 'Prevent' duty, is up to date. Staff have a good knowledge of potential concerns within the local area. This increases their vigilance in spotting and reporting concerns about pupils' well-being.

The school has a very friendly atmosphere, and pupils appreciate this. I observed and chatted with pupils, including during lunchtime, and they were relaxed and happy. They told me that they feel very safe in school and that, on the rare occurrences where bullying has occurred, it gets sorted out quickly. They enjoy coming to school and told me that they find the staff helpful and respectful. This, in turn, helps pupils to behave well and to have positive attitudes about the school.

Parents and carers appreciate the work that the school does to ensure that their children are happy and well taught. Many commented that the school is a truly caring place where you and your staff go above and beyond to ensure that an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere greets everyone. Because of this, pupils' attendance is extremely strong.

Inspection findings

- For the first line of enquiry, we agreed to look at key stage 1 pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly for the school's disadvantaged pupils. This is because, last year, standards for these pupils in mathematics were lower than in reading and writing. You have rightly identified this as a priority.
- The school has taken several important steps to improve mathematics. Teachers have received additional training and support from the local authority and the school's subject leader. This has given them greater confidence in instilling pupils with a real love of working with number and practical work, from an early age.
- You have changed the way mathematics lessons are planned and taught so that teachers can easily spot when pupils may be struggling to grasp a new concept. Taking on board the latest advice, pupils are now encouraged to look at

alternative ways to solve number problems. This frequently involves using practical apparatus, so they can gain a solid grasp of the reasoning involved and can apply their knowledge to new situations.

- The teaching of mathematics has shown significant improvement. During the inspection, I spoke to pupils who said how much they are enjoying this new focus on the subject. The subject leader is very effective in the way she keeps a check on the quality of teaching. As a result, standards are rising rapidly, and this subject is becoming a very strong aspect of the school's curriculum.
- The second line of enquiry was to check whether most-able disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in writing. Again, you and your team have been quick to address this area, and have made effective use of pupil premium funding to develop this area further.
- Pupils are helped to improve their writing through small intervention groups for those who may be falling behind, along with close monitoring of the quality of teaching in this area. To support the pupils, your staff have developed useful practice in developing oral language skills as a precursor to writing. This has proved very effective, and standards are rising quickly. Staff are working hard to ensure that pupils of all abilities are taught systematically in a way that meets their needs.
- Finally, we looked at computing, history and geography at the school. Though in 2017 standards in science were above the national average in key stage 1, the school's website said little about this and other subjects, and so I was keen to explore these areas of the curriculum.
- Since the implementation of changes to the national curriculum, leaders have developed the curriculum plan so that several subjects are brought together in themed groups to enable a better understanding for pupils. From speaking to pupils, who were keen to show me their work, I found that this creative approach to learning is proving very successful. Pupils achieve well across all areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils take pride in their work, which is often augmented with home-learning tasks. In some subjects, which are led by experienced staff, pupils are achieving well, such as in design technology, art and music. In other subjects, the work of the subject leaders is new and, although showing promise, is not yet as fully developed as it might be.
- Pupils understand how their subjects link together in topics. There was clear evidence that teachers can use pupils' enthusiasm for additional enrichment activities, such as 'wow' events and curriculum visits to enrich the learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school leaders who are new to their role are well supported so that pupils achieve equally well in all subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Tim McLoughlin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with three governors and held a meeting with a representative from the local authority. I considered the 50 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, and the 24 written comments on the free-text facility. I also considered the nine letters I received from parents at the school. You and the deputy headteacher accompanied me on visits to classrooms. I talked to pupils about their learning and spoke to parents on the morning of the visit. I looked at pupils' books and listened to a range of pupils read as they worked in lessons. The 15 staff surveys that were completed were used to gauge their opinion about working at the school. I also evaluated a range of school documentation, including school development plans, safeguarding records and information about current pupils' achievement.