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Mrs Amanda Lamy
Headteacher
Stanley Park Junior School
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Dear Mrs Lamy

Short inspection of Stanley Park Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 18 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment as headteacher of the school, you have ensured that the priorities raised in the previous inspection have been addressed. You have ensured that teachers use their checks on less-able pupils effectively to plan learning activities which are at the right level. You have introduced a range of strategies to engage with parents and carers so that they have a better understanding of the school's work. For example, parents receive curriculum headlines on the learning for the week ahead and are provided with suggested activities to support their child's learning. Your initiatives have resulted in increased communication and engagement with parents. A very large majority of parents agreed that the school is well led and managed.

Since 2016, the school's performance in national assessments has improved. The school's focus on improving pupils' reading skills, particularly their comprehension skills, has paid off. In 2017, standards improved at the end of key stage 2 and, for pupils as a whole, progress in reading was in the top 20% of schools nationally. The most able pupils' progress in mathematics has been in the top 20% for the last two years. The year group's attainment in these subjects was well above national averages at the expected and higher standards.

Your unwavering leadership has successfully addressed weaker teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning.

You, together with leaders and governors, have accurately identified the correct school priorities for continued improvement. For example, you have recognised as a key priority the need to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, you have rightly prioritised the teaching of writing across the school to raise standards. You agree that disadvantaged pupils' progress could be further improved in writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff are well trained and receive regular updates on safeguarding matters to ensure pupils' safety and well-being in school. The designated safeguarding leader makes sure that those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those who are looked after by the local authority, are well supported.

You have created a strong culture of vigilance. Upon arrival, visitors are requested to provide some form of identity – including this inspector – and are given different coloured lanyards to denote whether the visitor has had the relevant checks completed or that supervision is required. Staff know the school's procedures for raising concerns about pupils.

Pupils said that they feel safe at school. All say that they can talk to a trusted adult in school who will listen to their worries should the need occur. Pupils know how to keep safe when surfing the internet. For example, they talk confidently about setting strong passwords including numbers and letters to ensure their safety.

All parents responding to Parent View agreed that their children are safe in school. Typical comments from parents included, 'I feel the teachers and management team work extremely hard to provide a safe and happy environment.'

Inspection findings

- We began the inspection by investigating what leaders are doing to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress and attain highly. In 2017, at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils did not make as much progress as other pupils nationally. Consequently, their attainment at the expected and higher standards in reading and mathematics was below that of other pupils nationally. Similarly, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in science at the expected standard was below the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieved greater depth in writing was well below average compared to all pupils nationally.
- You have accurately identified the need to improve outcomes for this group of pupils and have taken effective action to address this. Leaders have set targets for class teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that there is a stronger focus on improving progress for these pupils. Pupils have learning coaches who regularly check on their learning and well-being. Additionally, you have introduced a reading programme for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to help them

improve their reading abilities. This year, the teaching of writing has been given a greater focus. You acknowledge that disadvantaged pupils in Years 4 and 6 could be further challenged to write at the greater depth standard.

- During our visits to classes, disadvantaged pupils in Years 5 and 6 were using a reading program on the computer to learn how to read excerpts of a text with fluency and accuracy. Pupils correctly answer questions to check their understanding. The work in disadvantaged pupils' books shows that they are making strong progress in writing, mathematics and science, and are working at the standards expected for their age. Pupils talked with confidence about how to improve their writing.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are given opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems. However, you agree that opportunities to develop their reasoning skills and explain their answers are inconsistent.
- Next, we focused on the effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that a higher proportion of the most able pupils achieve a greater-depth standard in writing. In 2017, at the end of Year 6, this group of pupils did not make sufficiently strong progress to attain the greater-depth standard. Their progress and attainment were below those of similar pupils nationally.
- You and your leadership team have recognised the need to improve the progress and attainment of the most able pupils in writing. Teachers have received training on how to teach writing effectively, which has focused specifically on how to teach pupils to write for a range of purposes and with the reader in mind. The written work in most-able pupils' books shows that they are making strong progress in writing and are working at greater depth in English and across a wide range of subjects. Pupils talk confidently about the level of challenge their teachers offer them. Additionally, they can talk in detail about what makes their writing 'good'. For example, pupils can explain the use of suspense and action in their story-writing to capture the interest of the reader.
- Finally, we agreed to look at how well leaders are improving rates of attendance and reducing persistent absence for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. In 2017, the attendance of these groups of pupils was below the national average and their persistent absence was high.
- You have used a range of effective strategies to improve attendance for these groups of pupils. These include incentives such as awarding the highest-attending class with a certificate and working closely with families and external agencies. These initiatives have been successful. The attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved and the level of persistent absence has reduced. This means that learning time for these pupils is maximised because they are spending more time in school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers raise their expectations of disadvantaged pupils in Years 4 and 6 so that more write at greater depth
- teachers consistently provide disadvantaged pupils in Years 3 and 4 with more opportunities to explain their thinking and to develop reasoning skills when solving mathematical problems.

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

Yours sincerely

Rajeshree Mehta
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. I met with seven members of the governing body. You and the deputy headteacher accompanied me on learning walks and we scrutinised pupils' work together during visits to lessons. I met with two groups of pupils, to scrutinise their work and discuss their learning and school experiences. I took into consideration 77 responses to Parent View, 49 free-text responses from parents and 57 pupil and 32 staff responses to the online surveys. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, documentation relating to safeguarding and assessment information on pupils' progress and attainment.