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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Tamsen Beer
Headteacher
Carlton Hill Primary School
Sussex Street
Brighton
East Sussex
BN2 9HS

Dear Ms Tamsen Beer

Short inspection of Carlton Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your care for your whole community and the desire for your pupils to do their best are at the heart of all you do. Parents and staff value your leadership and understand that you know your school well. They welcome your open and transparent relationship with them. You reflect on your pupils' and community's needs, and take relevant action to develop the school further. You are ably supported by your staff, who are as committed as you are to the school's values. Every member of staff is proud to work at Carlton Hill. Alongside your staff and governors, you have made sure that your school motto, 'Fair means everyone gets what they need, not that everyone gets the same', is a reality. You have made your school into a warm, nurturing and inclusive community where diversity is championed. As one parent said, 'The school embraces everyone.'

Under your leadership, your deputy has developed a strong monitoring and coaching programme for staff. This has been instrumental in strengthening teaching and learning throughout the school. In particular, the teaching of reading and mathematics has improved.

Pupils enjoy school. They find lessons fun, take pride in their work and particularly enjoy the practical aspects of their learning in mathematics. They like having jobs and responsibilities. The members of the school council take their roles seriously because they know they make a difference to school life. They are very proud of their school and are active in promoting equality and diversity. They were particularly pleased to tell me that pupils who join the school throughout the year

make friends easily, and those who speak English as an additional language become fluent very quickly and make good progress in their learning. Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs on offer, from sports and yoga to gender stereotyping. They enjoy the visitors and visits that enrich their learning experience. A recent library project has made them think about the school library, and they have rightly identified that they need a wider range of books for older and able readers. Pupils said, 'A lot of the books in the library are quite young.' You recognise that you need to provide more high-quality texts for both lessons and independent reading, to provide suitable stretch and challenge for all pupils.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, leadership and staff. They recognise that their children are safe, happy and well behaved at school, and would recommend the school to others. They trust staff to resolve any issues quickly, and value your open-door policy. Many parents appreciate the women's multicultural group, which provides practical and emotional support for parents who do not speak English as their first language and has widened their participation in school events. You ensure that there is as much help as possible for parents to understand and support their child's learning, and you value the contribution parents make to enrich the school community.

At the previous inspection you were asked to help more pupils achieve higher standards in mathematics by the end of key stage 2. You were also asked to track the progress of groups of pupils more clearly. You have successfully introduced new approaches to the teaching of mathematics. These include more opportunities for pupils to use practical equipment to support their learning. As a result, more pupils in key stage 2 are achieving the higher standard. In addition, you are trialling further innovative new methods in mathematics in Year 3 and Year 6. Pupils in these year groups are consequently making faster progress. You realise the need to extend this approach to the whole school, so that all can benefit from this success. You are now rigorous in tracking the progress of all pupils in your school. This helps you to provide effective support for pupils who have fallen behind.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that systems for safeguarding are thorough. Your documentation is conscientiously kept by your business manager. Alongside your governors, you monitor safeguarding closely and are confident that records are detailed and of high quality. Training in all aspects of safeguarding is up to date. Adults know how to report concerns, and you have been vigilant in making referrals to other agencies, such as social services, when needed. You support families well and parents appreciate the help you give them.

Pupils feel safe. The school site is a safe environment while still allowing the pupils a sense of adventure through the equipment available to them at breaktimes. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. Online safety is taught as part of the strong computing curriculum as well as in the comprehensive personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. You provide parents with useful safety advice on the school website, and the active online parents' safety group also keeps parents well

informed so they can support their children.

Pupils say that there is a small amount of bullying, but it is resolved very quickly if it happens. They have remembered the messages of anti-bullying week. They know what to do and trust the teachers to help them. Pupils and parents are confident that the teachers will swiftly resolve situations.

Attendance was above the national average last year. Fewer pupils are now persistently absent, due to the wide range of interventions and rewards which encourage them to attend school regularly. Your consistent application of the school values, together with effective support for pupils, has ensured that there have been no exclusions in the past two years.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on safeguarding arrangements for the school; how well the areas for improvement from the last inspection had been tackled; the effectiveness of support for the most able; the impact of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics, including the effectiveness of support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; and the quality of the curriculum.
- The focus on high-quality day-to-day teaching is improving learning for all pupils, whatever their ability. Teachers have good subject knowledge in English and mathematics. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, to help them make strong progress. Teachers are well supported by additional adults in the classroom who use skilled questioning to develop pupils' thinking and encourage them to use a wider range of vocabulary. The most-able pupils' books show well-developed writing since the start of the year. More pupils are achieving at greater depth in English and mathematics than they were at this point last year, particularly in Reception and Year 6.
- The school places a strong emphasis on the teaching of poetry. Pupils across the school enjoy this aspect of their English work and recognise that it encourages them to use more adventurous and varied vocabulary in their writing. Pupils make the best progress when teachers stimulate their ideas with high-quality, challenging texts, such as 'Beowulf'. However, sometimes texts used in lessons are too simple and do not provide effective models for pupils' writing. This adversely affects the quality of pupils' work and they make slower progress.
- Phonics is systematically well taught in key stage 1. Pupils make expected progress in their reading from low starting points. Progress in reading throughout the school has improved. This is due to a new school-wide approach to guided reading. This helps pupils use more specific language about reading. Older pupils back up their ideas using examples from the text, showing their deeper understanding. Staff value and enjoy teaching using the new approach, and pupils show a pride in their work. However, there is not always enough choice of texts to ensure that there is sufficient challenge for all pupils.
- The use of reasoning in mathematics is consistent across the school. Pupils enjoy tackling the challenges teachers provide and thinking their mathematics through.

However, some most-able pupils say they would like even more challenge. Many of the problems and activities are practical, and pupils readily handle mathematical equipment, which helps deepen their understanding. Pupils are developing greater fluency in calculation and they are proud of their speed and ability. Progress has been best for Year 3 and Year 6, who are part of a trial of a new mathematics approach.

- Disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly better progress throughout the school. Leaders use their rigorous tracking of progress for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities effectively, building on each step forward, however small. They provide bespoke, individualised, targeted help for learning. They ensure that pupils' needs are swiftly met to help them catch up.
- The inclusion coordinator is passionate about her role and helping pupils, whatever their need. There is also a constructive programme to develop pupils' self-esteem, which means pupils are positive about their needs. One staff member reflected that pupils see their special need as 'one challenge amongst lots of their strengths'. This helps them overcome barriers and succeed in their learning. All this work is helping these pupils to make good progress to catch up with their peers.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy the topics and say that school is fun because of the wide range of activities the teachers provide for them. The strong arts programme contributes to pupils' confident self-expression and well-being. They enjoy the opportunity to take part in community events such as the Brighton and Hove children's parade, as well as art experiences in school. They see, understand and value the links that have been made in the curriculum to equality and diversity. As well as using the rich diversity of its own community, the school has international school status and a link with a school in Kenya, to deepen pupils' global understanding.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- widen the range of texts available for teaching English and for independent reading, to provide sufficient challenge for all pupils
- build on the success of the new approach to mathematics trialled in Year 3 and Year 6 to benefit all 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 Brighton and Hove. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lesley Corbett
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, your English and mathematics teams, your inclusion coordinator, your business manager, seven governors and a group of pupils. I heard four pupils read and spoke to a representative from the local authority on the telephone. I also considered 22 responses to the staff questionnaire and 127 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I analysed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and documents relating to safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.