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Mrs Donna Clarke
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Dear Mrs Clarke

Short inspection of Redbridge Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 2019, 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Redbridge is a nurturing and very inclusive school. Inspirational leadership, modelled successfully by a highly committed staff team, is focused collectively on providing every pupil with the best education possible. Morale is high across the school. You have made sure that leadership is distributed well and, as a result, leaders are empowered to make improvements in their areas of responsibility. Your high expectations and vision that every child is always treated with dignity and respect permeate through every action in the school. As a result, pupils, including the most vulnerable, learn in a safe and encouraging environment. You are rightly proud of how well pupils behave and the choices that they make.

Pupils love many aspects of school life, such as challenging themselves in their learning and the range of leadership responsibilities they are given. The curriculum is enriched with many experiences that contribute to this love of learning. For example, pupils were very excited about their recent visit to the Harry Potter Studios, linked to their English studies. Parents, too, are happy with the school. As one parent commented, 'It's a lovely little school and I'm so glad my child attends it.'

At the time of the last inspection, inspectors identified many strengths of the school, including the good progress that children make in the early years. Children continue to make excellent progress from their starting points in early years. Most children join the Reception Year with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for

their age. At the end of early years in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development was very close to the national average.

Inspectors also noted effective governance. This, too, continues to be a strength of the school. Governors have high expectations for the education of pupils at Redbridge. They bring a wide range of professional skills which contribute to the level of challenge and support that they provide to leaders.

The previous inspection asked leaders to ensure that pupils make more progress through higher levels of challenge in all classes. Leaders have been very effective here in reading, writing and mathematics. An increasing proportion of pupils have been reaching the higher standard by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics combined over the past few years. In 2018, this proportion was in line with the national picture. However, challenge for the most able pupils is not so well embedded in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are meticulously kept and any concern about a pupil is dealt with immediately. Arrangements for checking the suitability of staff and volunteers are carried out thoroughly and accurately. Leaders have established strong relationships with external agencies. They have a secure understanding of local risks that may affect their pupils. Leaders know the needs and vulnerabilities of the pupils in their care extremely well. They have very strong relationships with families. As a result, there is a strong culture of vigilance that runs throughout the school.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is currently above the national average, including that of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and that adults listen to what they have to say. Pupils show a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. They told me that bullying can happen at Redbridge but 'teachers are good at solving it'. As one parent wrote: 'The staff have a wonderful, caring approach to educating our child'.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that the focus of the inspection would be to consider: challenge for the most able pupils; how effectively leaders and governors use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); and the attainment and progress of boys in English, including phonics.
- Classroom visits, including looking at pupils' work, showed that pupils, including the most able pupils, are routinely challenged in reading, writing and mathematics. Tasks are designed well to encourage pupils to think deeply. Pupils apply their English and mathematics skills to other subjects and to a range of contexts well. For example, in Year 3 pupils were applying their knowledge of ancient Egypt and beliefs about the underworld to help them write a realistic

diary entry for a lost princess.

- The most able pupils, and those with the potential to attain the higher standards, make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, this strong practice is not yet consistently developed within other subjects across the curriculum such as history and geography. The starting points of the most able pupils are sometimes not fully considered. As a result, the progress made by the most able pupils and those with the potential to work at greater depth in a wide range of subjects is not always as strong as it should be.
- The leadership of pupils with SEND is highly effective. Leaders have ensured that the school is extremely inclusive. They have a thorough knowledge of the specific needs of each individual pupil. Staff, who are well trained and highly skilled, carefully plan provision to ensure that needs are addressed. The approach has resulted in teaching that is highly personalised.
- A much higher proportion of pupils with SEND than is seen nationally attends the school. Nevertheless, pupils with SEND make strong progress at Redbridge. This was confirmed by a recent local authority-led review of provision for pupils with SEND. The review praised the accuracy of leaders' assessment of pupils with SEND and the quality of teaching for these pupils. As a result, high numbers of pupils with complex needs join the school. You remain committed to serving all pupils within your community, ensuring that they thrive at Redbridge, academically, emotionally and socially.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to provide any pupil who is falling behind academically with the correct support to catch up. Leaders also ensure that the pastoral needs of pupils are carefully considered when planning their provision. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress alongside their classmates.
- In 2018, at the end of key stage 2, the attainment and the progress of boys were below the national averages in reading and in writing. Boys' attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check was also below average. This is due, in part, to the high proportion of pupils with SEND in the school who are boys. Leaders' focus on seizing boys' interests has resulted in high engagement and enjoyment of all pupils, including boys.
- In order to improve boys' progress in English, leaders have carefully considered topics and texts that will interest both genders. During my visits to lessons across the school, I saw both boys and girls actively engaged, working hard and enjoying their English learning. Leaders have recently introduced a new approach to the teaching of phonics. However, during our visits to phonics lessons, there were some variabilities in staff knowledge and expertise in phonics teaching.
- Leaders' current assessment information shows that boys' progress in reading and writing is lower than that of girls. Boys' attainment is also lower than that of girls, particularly in writing. Leaders remain committed to increasing the progress that boys make, and thereby improving boys' attainment is a key priority within their improvement plans.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- phonics is taught to a consistently high standard
- staff raise the level of challenge for the most able pupils, and those with the potential to work at a higher standard, in subjects other than English and mathematics
- staff increase the progress and attainment of boys, particularly in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Lea Hannam
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the school's effectiveness. You and I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning, talk to pupils, and to look at their work. With your deputy headteacher, we looked at the quality of work in a range of pupils' books. I considered 22 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments. I also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day. Responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires were considered and I had a meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school.

I met with six governors, including the chair of the local governing body, and also met with a representative from the local authority. In addition, I met with the middle leader responsible for both early years and phonics, and the inclusion leader. I evaluated the school's safeguarding arrangements. A wide range of documents was examined, including: the school's self-evaluation, school-improvement planning, attendance information, information about pupils' progress, and various policies. I also examined the school's website.