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Mrs Karen Dhanecha
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dhanecha

Short inspection of Park Way Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 November 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 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the deputy headteacher are determined that all pupils who attend Park Way will have the very best provision in all aspects of their education. You work with tenacity and passion to secure this. You have developed strong links with other schools and work effectively with the local authority. This provides staff with the training and support to continually improve provision for pupils. Together with governors, you ensure that the school's vision of 'respect, responsibility and resilience' is modelled and developed by staff and pupils. Staff fully support leaders. All those who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire said they are proud to work at the school and that it is well led. Morale is high and standards are rising.

Governors share the very high aspirations held by school leaders. The governing body is dedicated, skilled and well informed, helping it to robustly hold leaders to account. Governors provide both support and challenge. They supplement the information they receive from leaders by regularly visiting to see the school's work for themselves. They analyse the school's performance information meticulously and ask leaders searching questions to establish how well groups of pupils are achieving. As a result, governors are highly effective partners in school improvement.

Pupils are proud of their school. They told me that they are encouraged to do their best in all learning. Pupils value their education. They particularly enjoy tasks which show them how much they have improved, for example, some writing challenges.

Pupils take pride in their work. For example, they told me how important it is to present their work well and take care with their handwriting. They also enjoy the opportunities offered by the wider curriculum, particularly art and drama. One pupil stated that art 'helps to express my creativity'. Parents value the inclusive nature of the education provided for their children. One free-text comment on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, was typical of views expressed by many parents: 'A fantastically diverse school which develops them into a group that are kind, considerate and successful.'

You have maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection. Leadership is highly effective and ensures that a wide range of systems are in place to improve the skills of both teachers and pupils. Pupils' behaviours for learning are developed well. For example, during the inspection, pupils were observed using various learning tools independently, including dictionaries. Pupils respond consistently well to teachers' feedback and work well in pairs and groups. While the level of fixed-term exclusion remains above that seen nationally, exclusion is used appropriately as a response to the needs of a very small group of pupils presenting specific behavioural challenge.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Achievement has continued to rise in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in pupils' outcomes information and in their books. However, the development of mathematics across the wider curriculum is not yet embedded as consistent practice across the school. Pupils' skills in foundation subjects are not yet as well developed as their core skills. This is your current school improvement focus.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All the necessary recruitment checks are carried out before adults can work in school and comprehensive safeguarding training is completed by all staff. Record keeping is meticulous. Safeguarding processes are reviewed by governors who work effectively with school leaders to ensure the school's systems and procedures keep pupils safe.

All staff who completed the Ofsted survey felt pupils were safe at school. Pupils told me about their e-safety lessons. Key information about e-safety is also shared with parents. There is a range of welfare support available for pupils and families who require additional help. This support ensures that more vulnerable pupils are kept safe. When further help is needed, leaders act promptly, involve external agencies, and take the necessary steps to safeguard pupils.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked at pupils' attendance. Pupils are attending school more regularly. Strategies that support the understanding of the importance of regular attendance for pupils and their families are personalised,

effective and regularly reviewed.

- Another focus for this inspection was the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). In recent years, pupils' outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check have been below the national average. However, pupils make good progress over time, with those joining the school after Reception Year and those who speak English as an additional language catching up quickly. Pupils are taught phonics systematically and effectively. Staff are trained well to teach the necessary skills. During the inspection, pupils demonstrated these skills in phonics sessions and when using them in their independent reading.
- We looked closely at the provision for the most able pupils in mathematics. In the unvalidated 2018 end of key stage outcomes for Years 2 and 6, smaller proportions of pupils attained the higher standards than nationally. In the lessons we visited, most pupils were provided with enough challenge to make good progress from their starting points and were enjoying mathematics. They could confidently apply their knowledge of number, for example their recall of multiplication tables, and calculation skills to solve problems. The school's own assessment information indicates that current most-able pupils are making good progress over time. Pupils' books show progress within years.
- The mathematics leader has been effective in improving teachers' subject knowledge and increasing the opportunities for developing pupils' problem-solving skills, for example through the popular corridor mathematics challenges. However, mathematics across the wider curriculum is not sufficiently well developed. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in meaningful activities across a range of subjects.
- We also looked at the progress pupils make in writing. Pupils' English books show they make good progress from their starting points with most aspects of their writing. Expectations are high and pupils demonstrate ambitious vocabulary choices in a range of evocative and well-structured work. These high standards can be seen in their writing across the curriculum. The English leader is quite rightly focusing on further developing pupils' spelling as it can be erratic, although it in no way inhibits pupils' vocabulary choices.
- Finally, we looked at the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding in science, as an example of the wider curriculum. In the 2017 and 2018 end of key stage 2 assessments, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected standard in science was below the national average. Current pupils develop scientific knowledge because the curriculum has been carefully planned. However, pupils are not systematically developing the science skills to enable them to plan, investigate and record their findings. The new leader has been provided with the appropriate training needed to lead staff's development in science. This is starting imminently and is rightly focused on the development of pupils' science skills. As yet, there has not been time to deliver this nor develop the monitoring system to ensure it has the desired impact.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there are increased opportunities across the wider curriculum to develop, consolidate and extend pupils' mathematical learning, particularly for the most able
- pupils' subject-specific skills in foundation subjects are further developed.

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

Yours sincerely

Deborah Gordon
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met regularly with you. I also met with members of the governing body and staff. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan, and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures.

Together, we visited classes across the school. In lessons, I observed pupils learning, looked at their books, heard them read and spoke to them about their work. I had a formal meeting with pupils to gather their views of the school. I considered the views of parents I met in the playground and also one email from a parent. You provided me with information from the school's own parents' survey and I took into account 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 16 free-text comments. I considered 25 responses to the Ofsted staff survey and 28 responses to the pupil survey.