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Mr Gavin MacGregor
Headteacher
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Dear Mr MacGregor

Short inspection of Southern Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2018 with Andrew Rigby, Ofsted Inspector, 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 Southern Road Primary School was judged to be good in June 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Although you are new to this role this academic year, you have worked well with senior leaders and governors to create a learning culture in the school. As a result, staff and pupils feel well supported to achieve their best. This is a happy school, which is valued in the community. Parents and carers have confidence in the staff to care for pupils, as well as to challenge them academically.

Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations by the end of Year 6 continues to be well above average. Pupils who speak English as an additional language continue to receive effective support, which enables them to achieve well. Leaders have developed the outdoor learning environment in the early years. As a result, there are better opportunities for children to develop their early reading, writing and mathematical skills outdoors. Following the introduction of new assessment systems, you are developing more ways of using the information to improve provision further for pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff are diligent in ensuring that everyone understands and carries out their responsibilities regarding keeping pupils safe. Governors hold the school to account for its safeguarding duty. The single central record of staff checks is well maintained, monitored and up to date. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training

and know the risks in the local community. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe through assemblies, visitors and the wider curriculum. They receive important guidance. For example, Year 5 pupils have attended workshops on the dangers of gang violence and extremism. They report that they feel safe at school and have a range of staff they can approach if they have any concerns. Pupil records are comprehensive, and incidents are well managed and addressed in a timely manner. The school works well with external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe and that any issues are caught early. There is clear evidence of communication and cooperation with parents to support pupils from vulnerable backgrounds.

Inspection findings

- The first area of focus related to how much progress pupils make by the end of key stage 2. Information on the school's performance last year showed that progress in reading was lower than previously and compared to other subjects.
- Pupils overall are presented with a range of well-considered reading opportunities. This includes access to challenging and interesting texts that make them enjoy reading. They develop a wide vocabulary because teachers give them techniques to learn and remember words and their meanings.
- Achievement in phonics is above the national average. Staff subject knowledge in this area is used well to tailor teaching to meet individual needs. Pupils read fluently and with confidence. Current pupils make strong progress in reading because of the school's targeted approach to the teaching of reading. In some lessons, activities based on texts were not always precisely linked to developing reading skills. As a result, there were missed opportunities to extend pupils' reading development further.
- The second key line of enquiry was the achievement of girls in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Information on how well girls performed last academic year suggested that girls' progress in mathematics was not as strong as that of boys. Fewer girls had also met the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls for current pupils in mathematics. Work is pitched well to ensure progress from different starting points. Written and verbal feedback are effective in supporting progress as pupils learn to correct their errors. There are regular opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills and they are consistently challenged. Staff make good use of visual modelling to teach difficult mathematical concepts, such as calculating time to the nearest five minutes in Year 2. As a result, progress in mathematics for both boys and girls is strong.
- The next key line of enquiry looked at the achievement of the most able pupils and whether or not the school was providing sufficient challenge in their learning. This was an area for development at the last inspection and performance indicators last year suggested that this was still an area for development, particularly in reading.

- The most able pupils in key stage 1 receive a high level of challenge in reading. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 who quickly achieve the expected standard in phonics are moved on to activities to develop their wider reading skills. For example, a group of most-able pupils in Year 2 have moved on to reading chapter books and demonstrate fluency and confidence in their comprehension skills. They speak articulately about the texts that they are reading and show a wide vocabulary for their age.
- In Year 6, teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to stretch pupils to acquire a wide vocabulary and read difficult texts independently. Pupils report that they are encouraged to choose to read ambitious texts and that they have been taught the strategies to do this successfully. The teaching of vocabulary is a strength and enables pupils to make strong progress in reading across all year groups. Pupils in both key stages enjoy talking with their peers about their learning and wanted more opportunities to do this in different subjects.
- The final focus area looked at how effective middle leaders are in their roles and the impact that they are having on the school's improvement. In the last inspection, this was an area for development as leaders were not clear about their roles. You have provided effective clarity, guidance and support for middle leaders to fulfil their role. They know their subject areas well and are clear about what you expect from them. There are systems and processes in place to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the quality of education in their area at classroom level. This includes regular opportunities to observe pupils learning in their subject and to look at their books.
- Middle leaders know pupils well and use assessment information to ensure that individual pupils make at least good progress from their starting points. As a result, pupils receive a curriculum that is rich, enjoyable and meets their needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders at all levels consistently use assessment information to plan learning for pupils and gain a sharper picture of achievement at the school
- pupils in all year groups are able to develop and deepen their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Karla Martin-Theodore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the senior leadership team, staff, pupils and your vice chair of governors. I had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner. We interviewed a group of pupils and listened to some of them read. We looked at information provided by the school, including safeguarding records, policies and procedures, and the single central record of recruitment checks. We looked at the school's assessment of its performance, and information about pupils' progress. Lessons were visited, including in phonics, reading and mathematics.