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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Lorraine Wickens
Headteacher
East Peckham Primary School
Pound Road
East Peckham
Tonbridge
Kent
TN12 5LH

Dear Mrs Wickens

Short inspection of East Peckham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is a friendly, welcoming place where pupils are safe and nurtured. You have created a vibrant environment. Everyone subscribes to the school's motto of 'equality, pride, success'.

You provide confident leadership and are supported very effectively by your deputy headteacher. Together, you have built a highly cohesive team of staff whose members share your determination that all pupils should achieve well and enjoy school. Staff are proud of the school and enjoy working there. They have full confidence in you. They appreciate the good professional development they receive, which helps them to continually improve their practice.

Parents and carers told me that they are pleased with the school's work. One comment typified the views of many: 'The team of teachers and teaching assistants take on the head's passion and are a credit to her and her vision of primary education.'

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They behave well in lessons and in the playground. Pupils are genuinely proud of their work and were keen to show me examples of which they were particularly proud. Year 6 pupils told me that they feel well prepared for moving on to secondary school. Governors are equally enthusiastic about the school and make frequent visits to see it in action. They have a clear insight and understanding of the school's work and support it effectively.

You have worked hard to address the issues raised at the previous inspection. You explained how you have improved the teaching of mathematics. You have made sure that staff receive up-to-date, focused training on the newly introduced approach to teaching mathematics. As a result, pupils have an increasingly good grasp of basic number skills and have frequent opportunities to practise and apply these to solve real-life problems.

Your work to improve the teaching of writing has been particularly successful. In 2017, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard in writing at the end of Year 6 was significantly above the national average. Work in the books of current pupils shows that they use a wide range of vocabulary and make good use of technology to support their learning.

You have built further on the strengths identified at the last inspection. However, you recognise that there is more work to do to accelerate the progress of pupils who leave key stage 1 with average attainment, so that more reach the higher standards in reading and mathematics.

Staff have worked well together to create a revised curriculum. This is making learning fun. However, you have rightly identified that there is work to be done to make sure that pupils make consistently strong progress in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective

Both you and your deputy are trained as designated safeguarding leaders so there is always someone for staff to speak to if they have concerns about a pupil. You make sure that staff and governors receive effective training, including frequent updates. As a result, everyone knows what to do to keep children safe. You and your leaders work closely with external agencies to help pupils and their families get any support they need. Your 'parent support' worker plays an important role in establishing and nurturing positive relationships with families to support vulnerable pupils where necessary.

A real strength of the school is how well you and your staff know all the pupils. Relationships across the school are positive. These help to make pupils feel safe. All staff, who completed their questionnaire, and the overwhelming majority of parents, who responded to Ofsted's online survey, agree that the school keeps pupils safe.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. They feel confident that they can talk to an adult if they have worries. Several pupils were eager to tell me about the good work of the well-trained Year 6 peer mediators who help when pupils 'fall out' at playtimes.

Pupils' attendance overall is higher than the national average. You work closely with the families of pupils who have lower attendance and can show examples where this has improved the attendance of individual pupils.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to focus on: how well disadvantaged pupils are achieving; how effectively teaching meets the needs of pupils who left Year 2 with average standards; how well the curriculum supports pupils' learning; and the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- Several disadvantaged pupils join the school at times other than the start of the year. You make sure that they receive good support and this helps them to settle quickly and make good progress. Leaders know each disadvantaged pupil well. You make frequent checks on their progress and provide well-considered support. As a result, overall, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. You have appropriate plans in place to make sure that their achievement continues to improve.
- In 2017, key stage 2 pupils with average starting points attained lower standards in reading and mathematics than similar pupils nationally. You were disappointed, and have taken firm action to address this. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that this is resulting in improvements in these pupils' progress.
- You are particularly pleased with the impact of your work to raise achievement in mathematics. Pupils are able to explain and articulate their thinking using mathematical vocabulary. Pupils' books show that they are also becoming skilled in writing about how they solved problems.
- You were wise to focus on increasing the amount of reading that pupils do, both at home and at school. Pupils told me that they enjoy the books they read in class. You have made sure that these books capture pupils' imagination. However, you are aware that the teaching of both mathematics and reading does not consistently give enough challenge for more key stage 2 pupils to reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Parents and pupils are enthusiastic about the revised curriculum. During the inspection, pupils spoke of their enjoyment of cooking biscuits; making clay pots to store their 'magic potions'; and designing a menu for a Stone Age family.
- The curriculum is now broad and balanced. However, you acknowledge that sometimes, learning is not demanding enough for pupils in some subjects and topics. You also recognise that there is scope for teachers to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in reading and mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress accelerates in key stage 2 so that more of them achieve the higher standards in reading and mathematics
- pupils make consistently strong progress in the wider 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 Kent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Toulson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the start of the day, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. We also agreed the aspects to focus on during the inspection. I met with other school leaders, three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. I spent most of the day in classrooms, visiting lessons, talking to pupils and looking at their work. Most of this time was spent jointly with you, your deputy or your special educational needs coordinator. I observed pupils in the playground and asked them for their views on school life. I reviewed the school's website and looked at a range of documentation including the school's single central record of staff recruitment checks, attendance information and the school improvement plan. I took account of the 40 responses by parents to Ofsted's online survey, the 19 free-text responses, and spoke to parents at the start of the school day.