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20 November 2017

Miss Elizabeth McIntosh
Headteacher
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Dear Miss McIntosh

Short inspection of Tunbury Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 17 October 2017 with Stephanie Scutter, 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 the school was judged to be good in July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, senior leaders and governors share the ambition and determination to improve the school further.

You have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to improve. As a result, you have maintained and built on the strengths identified in the previous inspection. You have also successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement. For example, most pupils now have a good knowledge of basic skills in mathematics, which has helped to improve outcomes in the subject. Most teachers now use assessment information well to ensure that tasks are planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Leaders are sharply aware that teachers' use of assessment information is more effective in some classes than in others. As a result, some pupils are not always appropriately challenged to achieve a greater depth in their learning and make more rapid progress.

You have an unwavering commitment to making sure that the quality of teaching and learning is good despite the many changes of staff and difficulties in recruiting permanent teachers. Senior leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning and offer support and guidance if your high expectations are not met. Rapid improvement is expected and rigorous performance management targets are set for staff. In the overall picture of the school's good teaching, you rightly acknowledge, however, that there is more to do to ensure that there is greater

consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the year groups and classes.

Since the previous inspection, you have expanded the leadership team to increase the leadership capacity. As well as the deputy headteacher, you have two assistant headteachers and each year group has a head of year leader. Your improvement plan shows that a priority is to develop the role of the head of year leader. This is to ensure that they play a greater role in monitoring pupils' progress and are increasingly accountable to senior leaders for pupils' progress and attainment in their year group. A large majority of staff are proud of their school, enjoy working in it, feel well supported and feel that leaders treat them fairly and with respect. A minority of staff share some of the concerns raised by some parents. These concerns are focused on leadership and management, particularly your accessibility and that of your senior leaders.

You, your deputy headteacher and the two assistant headteachers work well as a close and supportive team of senior leaders. Together, you use accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness to prioritise developments to improve outcomes for pupils. The success of your actions is evident in the 2017 results at the end of key stage 2, which are an improvement on the previous year. The proportions of pupils who reached the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics were higher than in 2016 and above those found nationally.

The majority of parents are supportive of the school's work and happy with the education provided for their children. They feel that their children are happy and safe at school, make good progress and are well looked after. You are acutely aware, however, of the concerns about leadership and management expressed by a number of parents. You acknowledge that you have not yet secured the confidence of these parents. Parents also, understandably, have concerns about the number of different teachers some classes have had. Your high expectations for the quality of teaching are partly, but not exclusively, a reason for many of the changes in staffing. You have also had difficulties in recruiting staff, which reflects the national picture.

Pupils like school, and want to do well and learn in the calm, safe environment. They enjoy learning, feel safe and behave well. Pupils are proud of their role in improving the school's outside areas. Pupils say that their teachers listen to them and that they can talk to an adult if they have any problems. They are in agreement that the school encourages them to respect people from other backgrounds and treat everyone equally. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about reading, the clubs offered to them and the 'brain-building' homework activities. A group of pupils agreed with one who said, 'The topics are interesting and make learning fun.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The designated safeguarding leaders, who

are senior leaders in the school, act swiftly when necessary and liaise well with other agencies to ensure that pupils in need receive timely and effective support.

There is a culture of safeguarding in the school and the safety and welfare of pupils have a high profile. For example, earlier this year, you commissioned a review of your safeguarding procedures, carried out by the local authority's safeguarding team, to check on the effectiveness of your policies and practice. There was a positive outcome from this review, and the recommendations that were made were put in place immediately.

A very large majority of staff, and parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, feel that pupils are happy and safe in school. One parent wrote, 'My child's teachers have helped to settle her really well and make her feel happy and safe.' Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is an adult at school they can talk to if something is worrying them. Pupils appreciate the fact that staff and visitors wear badges so that they know they have been checked and are safe to be in school. They also said that they, 'like the bamboo covering by the gate which stops people peering in and makes us feel safer'.

All staff receive regular and appropriate training in keeping pupils safe from a variety of risks, including those related to online safety. They also receive timely safeguarding updates to meet any new requirements. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Staff know that they are all responsible for pupils' safety and protection.

Attendance is above average. You are diligent in your work to reduce the absence rate of the small number of pupils who do not attend as regularly as they should, often because of family holidays. You keep a close check on the attendance of the different groups of pupils and as a result of your actions, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has improved.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look in particular at the following aspects of the school's work: pupils' progress in key stage 2, including that of different groups; the progress of the most able pupils in key stage 1, particularly in writing; the capacity of leaders at all levels to bring about further improvement, including to secure the support and confidence of parents; how well the curriculum ensures that pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects; and the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- The proportions of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 improved in 2017 from the previous year, and were above average. The proportions reaching the higher standards by the end of Year 6 also improved and were above average in reading and mathematics and in line with national figures in writing.
- The progress pupils made from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 was not significantly different from that found nationally. We agreed, and leaders are aware that, given pupils' starting points, more pupils could be making better

progress. You closely track pupils' progress in each year group in key stage 2, and within each year you track the progress of the different groups of pupils. You acknowledge that progress is uneven across the year groups and classes. Senior leaders are holding teachers to account more robustly, for example through pupil progress meetings and performance management targets, to make sure that these differences are eradicated.

- A current focus of your work is to increase the number of pupils who are working at a greater depth, particularly in writing in key stages 1 and 2. Training for staff to enhance the teaching of writing has recently taken place. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and are beginning to make their own decisions about the style of writing to use for particular tasks. High-quality and challenging texts are often carefully selected to inspire and motivate all groups, and have a considerable impact on improving the quality of pupils' writing.
- You focus carefully on the outcomes of different groups of pupils in the school and are aware of any gaps. You acknowledge that more needs to be done to ensure that in all classes, the most able pupils are challenged to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding, and that those who find learning more difficult are supported more effectively. Teachers generally plan challenges for pupils in lessons, but sometimes there is no time for the most able pupils to complete these challenges, as all pupils have to work through the same sequence of tasks from the beginning of lessons. This means that the most able pupils do not always make the progress that they could. In addition, some pupils who find learning more difficult are not always supported effectively and struggle to make good progress. At key stage 1, boys and girls achieve better than boys and girls nationally. You are mindful that in your school, girls do better than boys in reading and writing. You have taken action to address this, for example by involving boys in selecting books for the school's library to further engage and motivate their learning.
- You have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by visits, special events and a wide range of clubs. Topics are carefully selected to match the interests of different year groups. For example, space exploration in Year 5 appeals to all pupils and boys in particular. You have rightly identified that it is now important for pupils to achieve as highly in a range of subjects as they do in English and mathematics. You are making sure that this happens by strengthening the leadership of some subjects.
- You and governors are aware that while the majority of parents support the school and the education it offers pupils, you have not yet gained the confidence of all parents in the leadership and management of the school. The concerns expressed by some were mainly focused on your visibility and accessibility to parents, together with those of your senior leaders, as well as the high turnover of teaching staff. You and governors are striving to forge better relationships with parents. You ensure that your two assistant headteachers are in the playground at the start of the day to welcome pupils and their parents. You have set up a parents' consultation group. The purpose of this is to establish a mutual understanding, so that parents know the reasoning behind leadership and management approaches, including how and why you delegate responsibilities

among leaders, and senior leaders better appreciate the concerns of parents. This group was due to meet for the first time on the day following this inspection.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently high across all year groups and classes so that pupils, particularly those who are most-able and those who find learning more difficult, make more rapid progress and achieve greater depth in their learning
- there is greater cohesion within the school's community by strengthening partnerships with parents so that there is shared understanding of the work of leadership and management, including those of governors, and that the views and concerns of parents are understood and resolved.

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

Margaret Coussins
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors met with you and the deputy headteacher, and other senior leaders in the school. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body, and the local authority's school improvement adviser. You and your deputy headteacher accompanied the inspectors on their visits to classes. During these visits, the inspectors spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at their work. An inspector also observed pupils in the playground at morning break and at lunchtime, and met with a group of pupils to ask them for their views on their school. The inspectors reviewed the school's website and sampled a range of documents and records including: external evaluations of the school; information about pupils' achievement; leaders' checks on the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness; and documents relating to safeguarding. The inspectors took account of 294 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including 98 free-text comments. They spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and held three telephone conversations with parents. They also considered 35 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and 97 responses to the pupil survey.