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Ms Christina Jackson
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Jackson

Short inspection of Kew Woods Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 2017, 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 are pivotal in driving the school's continuous improvement. You have embedded a culture across the school which promotes pupils' academic aspirations alongside the physical and mental well-being of pupils and staff alike. You have skilfully restructured the leadership team, who work very effectively with all staff to provide a harmonious learning community.

You, and the deputy headteacher, have an accurate and reflective view of the school's strengths and priorities. Together you use information to produce school improvement plans that continue to help to move the school forward. You are determined to improve the school further and have high expectations of what you and your staff can achieve. Governors are well aware of all aspects of school life, including what could be even better. They bring with them a range of relevant skills with which they support and challenge you to drive improvements.

At the previous inspection in 2013 you were asked to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make the very best progress and ensure that activities are well matched to pupils' needs. The quality of teaching is never less than good and often better. This is because you both ensure that best practice is shared across the school and provide staff with opportunities to learn from others beyond your own school. Several staff are experts in their subject specialisms and provide support and training for other schools. Highly skilled teachers plan interesting and challenging activities for the wide range of abilities of pupils. The

enthusiasm of teachers is infectious and ensures that pupils develop a love of learning. The impact of this is seen in how well pupils progress as they move through the school.

You were also asked, in the previous inspection report, to increase the effectiveness of subject leaders in improving the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils in their subjects. Subject leaders have implemented a new broad and rich curriculum that expands the horizons of pupils. There are now whole-school approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. An example of the impact of this has been pupils' progress in reading across key stage 2 in the last two years, which has been in the top 20% nationally. Pupils develop a love of reading. Older pupils could tell me about their favourite authors and why they prefer certain genres of books. While the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the national average in 2017, the proportion reaching the higher standard was lower than the national average. Within your development plan you have identified this as a priority. You plan to ensure that pupils have the appropriate challenge across subjects so that more reach higher standards and greater depth of understanding across the curriculum.

Foundation subject leaders have established teaching of their subjects through topics which pupils clearly enjoy. Pupils engage in a wide range of performing arts events and many different sporting activities which promote teamwork, resilience and pupils' personal development. Staff give freely of their own time to take pupils on visits and trips beyond the local environment. Pupils talked animatedly about their pen pals who attend a school in Berkshire. They started writing to each other in Year 3 and then visited the school during their residential trip to London. Teachers carefully plan such experiences to maximise pupils' personal, social, emotional and cultural development. This type of experience has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of British values.

You and your staff continue to ensure that children get off to a flying start in early years. Parents told me how well their children have settled into Nursery and Reception classes and this was evident during the course of the inspection. Due to the high quality of teaching and the nurturing school community, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education by the time they leave school.

Safeguarding is effective.

In your role as the designated safeguarding leader, together with your deputy designated safeguarding leader, you work tirelessly to ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. You make sure that staff fully understand their duty and follow systems and procedures for logging concerns. Together with the office manager, you ensure that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children.

You make sure that the promotion of safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. You provide staff with training that is up to date so that they and members of the governing body understand the current guidance. You and the deputy

designated safeguarding leader are prompt in making referrals to the local authority. Together, you rigorously follow up all concerns raised by staff and make sure that pupils are kept safe from potential harm. You work well with a wide range of external agencies to provide expertise to support pupils' welfare, as and when necessary. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- As part of this inspection I looked at how the pupil premium funding is being used to support disadvantaged pupils, and particularly those identified as higher ability. The reason for this was that no disadvantaged pupils reached the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. Additionally, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics combined by the end of key stage 1 was weaker than for other pupils in 2016. You and the leadership team provide a raft of support for disadvantaged pupils using the pupil premium grant. Examples include subsidising the costs of school visits and curriculum enhancements. This enables pupils to attend residential visits and in turn provides opportunities to develop oracy skills and engage in talking to develop their writing skills. The impact of this has been the improvement in pupils' writing skills. In addition, you use this fund to employ teaching assistants to deliver interventions before school and this has led to all disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017. Funding is well used for both academic support and support for the social and emotional well-being of disadvantaged pupils.
- Secondly, I explored how the curriculum is engaging boys to develop their writing skills. This was because boys' writing was well below the national average in 2016 at the end of key stage 1. Also, in 2017, while the proportion of boys reaching the expected standard by the end of key stage 2 was higher than the national average for boys, girls in this school reached even higher standards. We observed how effectively teachers plan the use of role play as a tool to motivate pupils to talk extensively and build vocabulary before they embark on writing at length. Progress in pupils' books shows that opportunities for writing in topic work are also motivating boys. During my meeting with pupils, boys told me how much they enjoyed researching aspects of the Second World War and the ancient Egyptians. The new curriculum is engaging boys and girls alike in their writing.
- Thirdly, the progress of pupils in mathematics across key stage 2 dipped to average in 2017, so I investigated how well mathematics is being led across the school and the impact this is having on pupils' progress and attainment. The mathematics leader implemented a whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics just over a year ago. This is proving to be effective and is now being adapted by teachers with a focus on pupils gaining a greater depth of reasoning when problem-solving. Teachers effectively use technology in mathematics lessons and this provides pupils with instant assessment and opportunities to assess each other's work.
- Finally, I investigated the decline in attendance from 2014 to 2016 and the rise in

persistent absences. You provided me with evidence to demonstrate how well you and members of the governing body have continued to take action to improve attendance. You follow up in detail those pupils who are late, occasionally absent and persistently absent. You have solid evidence of success stories but a small minority of parents do not always help their children to attend regularly enough, and this interrupts pupils' progress. Your extensive work with other agencies and the local authority is of a high calibre.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of middle-attaining and most-able pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, reach the higher standards in mathematics and writing
- staff and external agencies continue to work with families whose children's progress is interrupted by too many absences.

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

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I observed teaching and learning across the school alongside the headteacher. I held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of the local governing committee, the designated safeguarding leader and the deputy designated safeguarding leaders. There were 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I spoke informally with parents at the school gates to seek their views and I took account of a letter I received from a grandparent. I held a meeting with pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during breaks and in lessons. I reviewed the 37 staff questionnaire responses and the 138 responses from the Ofsted pupil survey. During the inspection, I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation; and various records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.