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Mrs K Palmer
Executive Headteacher
Ms M Gilmore
Head of School
Gordonbrock Primary School
Amyruth Road
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Dear Mrs Palmer and Ms Gilmore

Short inspection of Gordonbrock Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 16 January 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your leaders have created a 'can do' culture of high expectations for all pupils. Staff consistently support and encourage pupils to do as well as they can. They have established an understanding that it is not a case of 'can't do', but rather 'can't do yet'. Pupils are therefore well equipped to handle the high levels of challenge in their lessons. When asked about editing his writing, one pupil told me, 'It's not the easiest thing to do, but if you want to improve your writing, it's worth it!'

The school is a vibrant and exciting place to learn, where academic challenge is set in the context of engaging topics in the broad curriculum. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe the school provides a very good standard of education. Parents trust the school to deal with any problems that arise. They particularly appreciate the caring ethos that enables their children to thrive. One parent captured this ethos, stating, 'The experiences that children are offered are genuinely enriching and empowering, and all are used to give children a strong sense of belonging and self-worth.'

Behaviour across the school, both in and outside lessons, is exemplary. Pupils are welcoming, well-mannered and polite. Their ability to go about their work independently and sensibly is particularly impressive, as is their care and concern to help each other. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to their progress in the classroom.

Since the last inspection, leaders have successfully tackled areas for improvement. Across the school, I saw pupils engaged in lessons that were set at the right level for them. Leaders have addressed previous concerns about mathematics in key stage 2 and writing in key stage 1. Teachers used questioning techniques to develop pupils' confidence and challenge them to try harder.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have successfully created a culture of vigilance, which is underpinned by regular training for all staff and governors. Good record-keeping ensures that the management of safeguarding is well organised and leaders are able to take swift action if necessary. The safeguarding team meets regularly and is rigorous in pursuing external support and action where necessary in the best interests of pupils. The over whelming majority of parents that responded to the Parent View survey said their children were well looked after and that they felt safe at school.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, one of which related to how effectively the school has continued to improve standards in writing, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. National assessments in 2017 showed that pupils made less progress in writing than they did in reading and mathematics through key stage 2, however this was still above national. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 achieving greater depth was lower than that of other pupils. We looked at how writing is taught across the school, from the Nursery through to Year 6.
- Senior leaders have implemented a consistent strategy to teach writing in creative and engaging ways. You have developed teachers' subject knowledge in the teaching of writing. In Nursery and Reception classes, we saw many opportunities for children to develop their language skills through play. The environment was organised to stimulate interest in writing about the curriculum topic of 'outer space'. Carefully planned learning opportunities encouraged children to play at being astronauts. Adults skilfully encouraged children to immerse themselves in the world of space in order to encourage imaginative play and write about their experiences. We saw children making very good progress in the acquisition of language. Strong progress was seen in their writing books.
- You have organised the Year 1 curriculum so that children continue to learn through play and continue to develop their speaking, listening and writing skills. This strategy is having a very positive impact. Children in Year 1 were proud to

show me their writing. Strong progress was evident in their books. Creative opportunities for writing continue throughout the school. Classrooms are rich in examples of pupils' writing, along with writing modelled by teachers. In every classroom, pupils have planned opportunities to write indoors and outdoors with a genuine purpose. In Year 6, we saw pupils acting out part of the story as a stimulus for writing. There is a consistent focus throughout the school on encouraging pupils to engage in a subject so that they are bursting to write about it.

- Current school information shows that key stage 2 pupils are on track to make very strong progress. A higher proportion than seen nationally are on track to achieve at the expected levels and to write in greater depth.
- We agreed that I would look at what the school has done to further develop standards of teaching. This is because you are working to improve the proportion of outstanding teaching. You are committed to the continuous development of your staff and I saw many examples of teachers' strong subject knowledge during this inspection. Teachers use focused questioning to challenge pupils and extend their thinking. They plan to make sure there is an element of challenge in every activity.
- You have strong strategic planning for improving teaching and learning across the federation. Teachers regularly plan and moderate assessments across schools. Termly expectations for pupils' progress and attainment are clear. This means that any pupils not making sufficient progress are quickly identified, with teachers planning accordingly to close any gaps in learning. Teaching has consequently, moved to the next level and beyond, focusing on the key skills that are needed for learning.
- You and your staff have developed simple, but highly effective, methods of giving pupils feedback in order to improve their work. Pupils told me that their teachers help them improve their writing through this feedback. Occasionally, however, pupils had not fully incorporated teachers' helpful comments for improvement into their writing. I saw many examples of pupils evaluating each other's writing and giving insightful suggestions for better word or grammar choices. You have created a climate where pupils have the confidence to take risks with their writing, knowing their efforts will be respected and valued.
- Teachers use the characteristics of a growth mindset to support pupils' personal development as learners. The editing and redrafting of writing in pupils' books demonstrated resilience and an independent determination to improve. One boy told me, 'even if it's not my best thing, writing is a life skill'.
- Governors know the school well. They monitor the school's work closely and make visits to see for themselves the impact of the school's plans. They appreciate that school improvement work is well considered and based on compelling research evidence.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils benefit consistently from high-quality feedback on how to improve their writing so they make even better progress
- the high-quality training continues to improve teaching, learning and assessment.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Brinkley
Ofsted inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school and senior leadership team. I also held meetings with the English subject leader, the inclusion leader, phase leaders and governors. I scrutinised pupils' work in English. I visited lessons in the Nursery, Reception, and key stages 1 and 2 to observe learning taking place. I talked to pupils about their learning throughout the day as I visited lessons. I listened to pupils reading in key stages 1 and 2. I met with parents at the start of the school day and analysed the 148 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I scrutinised documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, pupils' attendance information, documentation related to safeguarding, and the school's assessment and behaviour information.