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Dear Miss Caldwell

Short inspection of Park Walk Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 October 2016, 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the leadership team are focused on the things that really matter in order to drive improvements at the school.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement that were identified at the time of the previous inspection. Rapid action made sure that pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has been favourably comparable to national averages since 2012. Over recent years, differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally at the end of Year 2 have reduced. In 2015 assessments, disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieved as well as other pupils nationally.

The school's systematic approach to teaching phonics is extremely effective in developing pupils' initial reading skills, including for the least able readers. All groups of pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language, succeed in using phonics confidently to read. As a result, a very high proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, compared to national averages reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

Leaders have made sure that the school's approach to teaching mathematics motivates pupils and helps them to achieve very well. In 2016 assessments at the

end of Year 6, provisional results suggest that the most able pupils reached the expected standard and more pupils achieved a high standard in mathematics compared with national averages. The teaching of writing is not as dynamic in building pupils' fluent handwriting and secure knowledge of writing skills, particularly in key stage 2. You identified improving pupils' writing as a key area for development last year. However, you are not satisfied with the impact of initiatives that were put in place last year and raising pupils' achievement in writing remains at the top of your list of priorities.

You have improved the quality of communication with parents and carers, another recommendation from the last inspection report. Workshops for parents on a wide range of topics, including how multiplication, reading and phonics are taught, are well attended. These workshops help parents to support their children's learning at home. Weekly newsletters keep parents well informed about the work their children are doing in lessons. Parents that I spoke to told me that they value the opportunity to speak to their child's teacher at the start of the school day.

The broad curriculum is enriched through a wide variety of well-chosen activities and events, and an extensive range of popular extra-curricular clubs. Themed weeks, including book week and science week, encourage pupils to develop their interests. The most able readers that I met in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about reading and the books that they enjoy. Pupils' sporting success, for instance in football and netball competitions against other local schools, is frequently celebrated. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 benefit from swimming lessons in the school's training pool. Older pupils extend their swimming proficiency in sessions at a local swimming pool. All members of Year 6 are keen to play their part in the life of the school by taking roles of responsibility as school councillors, house captains, sports leaders or playground mentors. You foster pupils' understanding, respect and tolerance of differences through learning Spanish and celebrating festivals from a wide range of cultures and faiths. All these strengths make sure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged strongly.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks on the suitability of staff appointed to work at the school are painstaking and take account of the most up-to-date guidance. Safeguarding training for staff is repeated annually to make sure that all staff know the school's systems and procedures. Working in partnership with the local authority, leaders make sure that staff have completed specialist training, including training to help them identify pupils who may be at risk from exposure to extreme ideas about right and wrong. Records show that the school takes swift action, together with outside agencies, to support and safeguard the welfare of pupils should any concerns arise.

Workshops for parents on safeguarding issues, including on how to keep safe when using information and communication technology, provide advice for parents on

how to keep their children safe from harm. Pupils have benefited from scooter training sessions to help them keep safe when travelling to school.

Inspection findings

- Since you joined the school in September 2015, you have wasted no time in tackling the previously low attendance rates. You have made the importance of pupils' regular attendance at school very clear to the whole school community. You have inspired pupils to be in school every day by rewarding those with the best attendance in assembly each week. Pupils are motivated by the fun activities you introduced last year.
- Through effective partnership work with outside agencies, leaders have provided support for families that need extra help in order to bring their children regularly to school. Attendance rates have risen for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and are average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced. You are correctly maintaining the school's keen focus on attendance because you are ambitious to secure even better attendance rates.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school because leaders have put a broad and exciting curriculum in place. Projects led by pupils in each class develop pupils' sense of responsibility for the community and the environment. For instance, pupils in Year 3 considered the importance of local allotments as part of a project exploring the availability of fresh produce to people living in apartment blocks. Pupils in Year 6 were proud to present the findings of their King's Road air quality assessment to the local authority's children's parliament.
- Last year, leaders introduced a number of changes to the curriculum to raise pupils' writing skills. The impact of this on pupils' achievement in writing was uneven. In key stage 1, the school's provisional assessment results suggest that more pupils reached high standards in writing at the end of Year 2 compared with pupils nationally.
- In key stage 2, the curriculum and other initiatives have been less effective in helping pupils to develop strong writing skills over time. Provisional assessment results in writing in 2016 suggest that considerably fewer pupils than nationally achieved the expected and higher standards at the end of Year 6. Work in pupils' books shows that the quality of pupils' handwriting and their use of features of high-quality writing remain variable. You and senior leaders are determined to make further changes to the way writing is taught and are putting initiatives in place to tackle this quickly.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are happy and enjoy the varied curriculum that teachers plan. Photographs in children's learning journey record books show the wide range of activities that they are able to choose. Children in the Reception class were eager to make vehicles and boats from recycled materials. They learned about floating and sinking through playing with them in the water tray in the outside area.
- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has risen year on year, including in provisional assessment results in 2016.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching and the curriculum support pupils in building strong writing skills in key stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Kensington and Chelsea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection considered how effectively leaders are improving pupils' achievement in writing across the school. I also examined the impact of leaders' work to increase attendance rates, including for disadvantaged pupils.

During the inspection I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher. I met five governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a discussion with the literacy leader. I visited classes from Nursery to Year 6 to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. I spoke to pupils in lessons and listened to pupils read in key stage 2 and Year 6. I evaluated recent information about pupils' academic outcomes. Records about keeping pupils safe and about attendance were evaluated. I spoke informally to parents in the playground at the start of the day and considered 39 responses to Parent View, the online Ofsted survey tool.