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Miss Caroline King
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Miss King

Short inspection of Colvestone Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 May 2014.

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 your leaders are determined that all pupils receive the best possible education. You have high expectations of pupils' academic achievement and you also prioritise the development of important life skills such as independence, problem solving and creativity. Your mission statement is that 'educating the mind without educating the heart is not education at all'; pupils understand this aim and told me that everyone looks after each other, especially if someone is lonely at playtime.

Over the last two years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been in line with or above average. Consequently, children are well prepared to enter Year 1, where they make sustained and, this year, accelerated progress. In 2017, at the end of key stage 1, attainment for pupils at Colvestone was at or above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of key stage 2, while pupils' progress and attainment were broadly average in writing and mathematics, they were below average in reading. This was a key focus for this inspection.

You have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and correctly prioritise areas for improvement. You have shared your evaluations with governors and developed plans to bring about improvements, particularly with respect to raising standards in reading comprehension. You work effectively to track pupils' attendance and have eliminated persistent absence. Attendance rates at the end of January 2018 were just above the national average.

The previous inspection recommended that you develop the recently introduced strategies for teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation. To this end, you have provided a range of training and professional development to extend teachers' skills and improve their practice. Effective teaching is increasing pupils' ability to spell accurately and use grammar appropriately. The teaching of phonics remains strong and has supported year-on-year improvement; this has helped pupils to become fluent readers more quickly.

You have a relentless focus on improving the quality of the curriculum. You are providing the pupils with a creative and diverse curriculum which broadens their minds and helps them think critically. The curriculum often focuses pupils' learning on the community around them. This provides pupils not only with good subject knowledge, such as the geography and history of the area, but also with a strong sense of identity and connection to where they live. Notably too, pupils' literacy skills are developed across the curriculum.

Leaders promote equality and tolerance well. I found pupils to be kind and caring towards each other and adults. Pupils who joined the school recently commented on how they received a warm welcome and settled in within a few days. The vast majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that the school is friendly and inclusive. Parents also noted that the school encourages 'a love of learning'. Pupils told me that they enjoy lessons because they are interesting.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding because you, your staff and governors give the safety of pupils a high priority. All adults in the school are appropriately trained in identifying signs that pupils may be at risk of harm. The single central record of staff recruitment is maintained accurately and is checked regularly by you and the local authority. Pupils were quick to tell me who they would go to if they were worried. They were confident that adults would take them seriously and 'sort things out straight away'. Governors are aware that more work can be done to promote pupils' safety in their community; they told me they will identify the key risks and ensure that pupils receive effective support in managing areas of risk.

Staff ensure that pupils are equipped with age-appropriate knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe at school and online. Pupils are very aware of the school's behaviour system and understand how and when it is applied. Leaders work very well with external agencies to provide both training for staff and safeguarding events for pupils. For example, there are partnerships with the Young Hackney transition programme, the citizenship partnership and the NSPCC.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, the first area I focused on was the attainment and progress made by pupils in reading by the end of key stage 2. This was identified as a weakness following a decline last year.

- School leaders have undertaken a thorough analysis of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' reading. Common shortcomings have been identified, such as the difficulty some pupils have in retrieving information from a text and making inferences from their reading. A new programme to improve pupils' comprehension skills has now been established across key stage 2. Using this resource, class teachers are planning activities to address the skills deficiencies. In addition, staff increasingly promote reading in school and at home. The well-stocked library provides a stimulating learning environment and pupils told me they are keen to explore different authors and genres. The headteacher and I observed 'reading ambassadors' from Years 5 and 6 helping younger children at lunchtime with their reading fluency.
- You are fully aware that middle prior attaining pupils and those in receipt of pupil premium funding do not progress as well in reading as they should from their starting points. Your school's self-evaluation accurately focuses on the need to ensure that all teachers are consistent in identifying and overcoming these pupils' barriers to learning. More broadly, while the overall quality of English teaching is effective, with some very good practice, there are inconsistencies in some year groups. The leadership team is fully aware of these deficiencies and is working to secure sustained improvement.
- My second key line of enquiry was the effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment and, specifically, the accuracy of their judgements. This was because this was an aspect of the school's work that you identified as having made an impact on pupils' improving progress.
- Leaders and teachers have a wealth of knowledge about pupils' progress and attainment which is used well for a range of purposes. You hold regular meetings to track pupils' progress towards their end-of-year targets in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows, for example, that pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach national expectations. Work in pupils' books shows how carefully teachers use assessment information to plan learning that matches pupils' needs.
- Leaders and staff work hard to ensure that assessment information is accurate. You have increased the level of moderation across all key stages, including with another school in the federation, schools in the Hackney Learning Trust and through external moderation from a local authority adviser.
- Finally, I considered the effectiveness of middle leaders. This was to see how far their roles are focused on raising standards in their areas of responsibility. I looked at documentation which reflected the impact of their work and talked with them.
- Middle leaders form a well-trained, experienced and effective team. They have led major changes to the curriculum and supported new teachers to develop the skills to deliver a challenging and relevant curriculum. They are well informed about standards and progress across the school and accurately identify any underperformance. They take timely action to improve the key issues identified by the school and the impact of their work is positive.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching continues to improve across the school to bring about greater consistency
- by the end of key stage 2, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading improves so that they meet or exceed national expectations.

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

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress, and improvements made since the previous inspection. Together, we did a 'learning walk' through early years and key stages 1 and 2. We observed teaching and learning in key stage 2 classrooms and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. I analysed reading records and scrutinised the English books of 10 pupils. I met with pupils to listen to them read and talk about their reading habits, their experience of school life and how safe they feel. I held meetings with governors, the local authority school improvement adviser, middle leaders, the assessment manager and the lead for safeguarding. I looked at a range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, current progress data, the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding. I also considered documentation relating to your curriculum model and the teaching of reading. I took account of the views of 64 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, their written comments, emails and the views of parents who spoke to me before the start of the school day. I also took account of the views of four members of staff and the views of pupils I met during the day.