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Ms Lucy Rodgers
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Rodgers

Short inspection of Colindale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2018 with Helen Bailey, 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in September 2016, you have been proactive in addressing the priorities identified in the last inspection report. The governing board has been restructured. Governors use a range of skills to challenge and support leaders.

You are developing a strong and determined leadership team that works closely together. Leaders set high expectations of all pupils and encourage pupils to be ambitious and have high aspirations for themselves. Pupils in the specially resourced provision are taught in mainstream classes in all year groups. Leaders and staff ensure that these pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects and activities. Their needs are met well.

You and governors have highlighted the use of pupil premium funding as an area for further development. The strategies that you have deployed, such as focused group work and phonics teaching, are beginning to narrow gaps in progress and attainment for some pupils. However, this is not the case in all year groups.

Senior leaders, alongside a developing subject leadership team, are beginning to establish a deep, broad and balanced curriculum which makes links between

subjects. As a result, a strengthened curriculum is emerging. You have created opportunities for pupils to take the curriculum outside the classroom, igniting their enthusiasm for learning. For example, pupils are excited to participate in a design and technology project creating animals in collaboration with the neighbouring RAF museum. You and your leaders agreed that more work still needs to be done to deepen and strengthen the curriculum offer to pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

All safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose. You have ensured that staff are well trained and receive regular updates on safeguarding through meetings and weekly bulletins. Staff who spoke with inspectors are aware of the immediate actions they should take if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. The designated safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable about the possible risks faced by pupils. Checks on staff are robust, and records related to child protection are detailed and thorough.

Leaders work closely with external agencies. When concerns arise, leaders take swift action and make sure that any concerns are followed up thoroughly. Referrals when made are timely and appropriate. Leaders rightly challenge decisions when cases are not followed up quickly enough by external agencies.

Pupils have a thorough understanding of different forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when working online. In the online surveys, pupils, staff, parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about how well the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- At our initial meeting, we agreed three lines of enquiry for this inspection. First, we considered how effectively leaders are held to account for the impact of the pupil premium funding. In 2017, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of key stage 2 was well below that of other pupils nationally.
- This academic year, governors are working closely with the senior leadership team to check the impact that the pupil premium funding has on narrowing differences between the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. As a result, progress gaps are closing between disadvantaged and other pupils in the early years, and in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent in other year groups, particularly in key stage 1 reading. This is because not all phase leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively throughout the school to support disadvantaged pupils. This is an area for further improvement.

- The second line of enquiry considered boys' progress in reading and writing, particularly in key stage 2. In 2017, boys' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 was significantly lower than that of the girls. Inspectors looked at pupils' books and visited classes to observe the teaching of reading and writing.
- Work in pupils' books and on display suggests that leaders are having an impact in improving boys' writing. You have made sure that boys' interest is captured and boys' writing shows some high-quality work. For example, in Year 5 boys were enthusiastic about writing biographies about the cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin and this led to some vibrant, descriptive writing.
- You and senior leaders have developed a guided reading strategy for use throughout the school. Typically, this is having a positive effect on the depth of pupils' reading. For example, in Years 5 and 6, teachers skilfully promote pupils' thinking. Pupils are keen to discuss their views and extend their vocabulary.
- Year 3 and Year 4 pupils read with fluency and expression. However, some pupils do not securely understand what they read. This is particularly the case with boys. When pupils are not appropriately guided by the teacher, they choose texts which are either too challenging or not demanding enough. Teachers do not routinely check the books that pupils choose to read in order to help pupils to improve their reading.
- The third key line of enquiry explored the breadth and depth of the curriculum and how effectively the curriculum supports pupils' learning. You told me that this is a strength of the school because you believed it offered pupils depth, breadth and balance. Inspectors visited classrooms, looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils to ascertain if this was the case.
- Around the school, displays of pupils' work across curriculum subjects are of high quality. For example, in Year 3, pupils' artwork demonstrates good progression from simple paper tearing techniques to intricate collage work. The wider curriculum is particularly strong in the early years and key stage 1. For instance, a project about the seaside provided pupils with opportunities to develop their skills across a range of subjects, including art and writing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- disadvantaged pupils make consistently good progress, including in key stage 1 and Year 3
- all pupils, especially boys, are appropriately challenged by their reading texts.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hook

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- Inspectors read a variety of documents, including your self-evaluation of the school's performance.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with parents.
- Inspectors visited classrooms with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and scrutinised a range of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with leaders, other members of staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- In addition, inspectors considered pupils' responses to the online survey, responses to the staff survey and responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents.