

16 July 2018

Miss Seana Henry
Headteacher
Alderbrook Primary School
Oldridge Road
Balham
London
SW12 8PP

Dear Miss Henry

Short inspection of Alderbrook Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 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 April 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your clear and determined vision has ensured high expectations for work and behaviour across the school. Your commitment to the professional development of teachers has resulted in successfully growing a skilled team of senior and middle leaders. Accurate evaluation has enabled you and your team to quickly identify the strengths and areas to develop within the school. Effective working between leaders and governors has ensured that high standards have been maintained through the period of expansion to two classes in each year group. You have created a happy and welcoming school where the focus is on pupils' learning. The culture of the school is much appreciated by parents and carers, who typically spoke about the positive experiences both they and their children enjoy at Alderbrook Primary School.

You have addressed the issues identified at the last inspection by ensuring that teachers have the skills and knowledge, through professional development, that are required to deliver the curriculum effectively. Good practice is shared across the school. Key leaders provide ongoing training, support and advice to teachers. Your decision to change the way in which guided reading is taught has ensured more challenge and improved comprehension skills. This resulted in above-average national results in both key stages 1 and 2 in 2017. In addition, phonics has a high profile and is strongly embedded in the early years and key stage 1. Consequently, pupils have achieved significantly higher than national outcomes

in the Year 1 phonics screening check since the last inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. Governors ensure that effective recruitment systems are in place and all staff are aware of their duty to keep children safe. Regular training takes place for staff so that their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding are up to date. Leaders work effectively with other organisations when necessary to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Governors are thorough in ensuring that safeguarding systems are robust and conduct audits to satisfy themselves that they meet statutory requirements.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in the local community. They feel listened to by the adults around them and are confident to share any worries they might have. They report that bullying is not an issue in school but know what to do if they or one of their friends is being bullied and they feel sure that any concerns would be effectively dealt with.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed on key lines of enquiry. The first was the use of pupil premium funding and how effectively it is used to improve outcomes and accelerate progress for disadvantaged pupils. This is because there have been differences between the progress and attainment for this group of pupils when compared to other pupils nationally. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1. In key stage 2, outcomes in reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar were below those of other pupils nationally. In addition, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard of greater depth was below others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. I found leaders have quite rightly identified this group or these groups as an area for improvement. Leaders know these pupils, their needs and their barriers to learning well. Governors routinely challenge leaders on the impact of spending and track this group carefully.
- You know the pupils and their families well. Emotional support and engagement are a strength. Pupils are helped to develop behaviours and attitudes that enable effective engagement in lessons. Subsidised access to the breakfast club and after-school activities ensure good attendance, boost confidence and strengthen social relationships. The progress of disadvantaged pupils is a high priority for all. Catch-up programmes are in place and are closely monitored to ensure that pupils meet the targets set. You are aware that, although there is still some work to be done in this area, progress and outcomes for this group are improving. Evidence for this was seen both in pupil' workbooks and in the school's own data.
- We then agreed to consider how effective leaders' actions have been in improving outcomes for higher-attaining pupils in mathematics. This was because fewer pupils in key stage 2 achieved the higher standard of greater depth than

other pupils nationally. In addition, pupils in key stage 2 also achieved less well than they did in reading and writing. Core subject areas are well led and managed. Support and training have ensured that teachers now know what the higher standard of greater depth looks like in reading, writing and mathematics. Secure tracking systems and pupil progress meetings alert leaders to where additional challenge or support is needed.

- Children in the early years demonstrate a good understanding of how to sound out and spell words. They have opportunities to write in all areas of the curriculum and the building, both inside and outside. As a result, they confidently draw and record their work, explore sounds and construct basic sentences. The systematic approach to the teaching of phonics from the early years upwards has impacted positively on spelling. The key skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling are well taught across key stages 1 and 2. Pupils show a good understanding of these skills in their writing books, presentation is of a high standard and handwriting is neat. In writing books, good-quality sentence structure, organisation and vocabulary choices ensure that pupils construct interesting and effective reports, stories, explanations and poetry. Teachers provide clear and precise guidance for pupils, which helps them improve their work. Pupils edit work in their writing books effectively. They take care in the presentation of their work and handwriting is neat. When writing in other subjects, the writing produced is not of the same high standard. There are fewer opportunities to edit and improve writing in other subjects. Teachers are not consistent in insisting that pupils produce writing of the quality they are capable of across the curriculum.
- Pupils read daily during whole-class guided reading lessons. There is a focus on developing comprehension skills. Teachers ask searching questions that make pupils think hard. They insist that pupils support and justify their answers, rather than simply giving personal opinions. This has strengthened greater-depth skills such as inference, deduction and being able to discuss why the author used a particular word or phrase. Those who find reading difficult are well supported through interventions which ensure that they too make the progress expected. Pupils read a range of interesting and challenging books, both in school and at home.
- All pupils, including higher-attaining pupils, are motivated and challenged by the introduction of mastery into the mathematics curriculum. Leaders have ensured that teachers understand how to develop pupils' understanding through reasoning. Talk partners and lots of opportunities in lessons to discuss mathematics have resulted in pupils being able to talk about and explain their thinking. Teachers model methods and use resources well to help pupils develop a better understanding of mathematical skills and use them well. Pupils use mathematical vocabulary well because teachers routinely use it in lessons. Leaders are strengthening pupils' mental mathematics and recall skills through arithmetic sessions. This is helping pupils become more confident with multiplication tables, place value and number bonds. Engagement and motivation are strong. Pupils are resilient and do not give up easily. However, higher-ability pupils spend too much time doing things they can already do. They are not challenged for enough time during the lesson to develop their skills at greater

depth.

- Finally, we considered the wider curriculum to see if it meets the needs of all pupils. We found that the curriculum is broad and subject leaders monitor books to ensure that all subjects are covered. Displays of pupils' work around the school are bright and of a good quality. Trips and visitors are popular with pupils and enrich the curriculum. There are many strengths in the curriculum, including physical education, which provides opportunities for pupils to participate and develop skills in a range of areas. Music and art are also of a good standard and play an important role in widening pupils' experiences and knowledge. The introduction of new topic books has ensured that the work pupils produce is displayed in an eye-catching way in their books. However, there are insufficient opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to study subjects in depth. There is not enough challenge for higher-attaining pupils across the wider curriculum. Pupils are not required to think harder or work on more complex ideas and concepts than others. As a result, there are not enough opportunities to deepen their knowledge.
- There are too few chances for pupils to write at length across the curriculum. Therefore, they cannot demonstrate their good writing skills in all subjects. The amount of writing produced is often limited by the space provided to write in. In the core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science, pupils are taught to develop skills such as how to interpret and present information, ask questions, explain and justify their thinking, conduct a fair test and research using computers. However, they do not get opportunities to use these skills to make their own decisions as to how they might show their learning. Teachers usually decide how pupils record work. This limits quality and restricts opportunities for pupils to use the skills that are so well taught across the wider curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics, higher-attaining pupils receive more challenge and do not spend time doing things they can already do
- writing in all subjects is of the same high standard as it is in writing books
- pupils have more opportunities to develop subject knowledge in greater depth.

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

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised pupils' work in English, mathematics and a range of subject and topic books. I visited lessons in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 to observe learning. I talked to pupils about their learning both at formal and informal times throughout the day. I met with parents at the start of the school day and analysed responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I analysed staff and pupil questionnaires. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, pupils' attendance information, documentation related to safeguarding and the school's assessment and behaviour information.