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Ms Kerry Scott
Headteacher
Ainslie Wood Primary School
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Dear Ms Scott

Short inspection of Ainslie Wood Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 2019, 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 December 2015.

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 specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You, your leadership team and governors have been on a journey of continuing and significant improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils are inspired and motivated to learn. This has been achieved through a curriculum that provides pupils with rich learning opportunities. Pupils acquire knowledge through active exploration of real-world challenges and problems across a range of subjects. This broad and balanced curriculum inspires pupils to learn more, enabling them to become experts in all aspects of their education. You are focused on developing leaders from within the school. You and your leaders have developed collaboratively this creative curriculum which puts active learning for all pupils, whatever their starting points, at its heart. Links are made across subjects to ensure that, where possible, you involve parents, carers and the local community. Middle leaders speak knowledgeably about their areas of expertise and appreciate the support they have received to develop their leadership skills. Your school's achievements and its curriculum are a model for teachers from other schools, locally, nationally and internationally. The school motto – 'Inspirational leaders, Aspirational learners' – is at the heart of the leadership team's drive for the school

to be a world-class centre of excellence. The governing body is strong and fully committed to supporting and challenging leaders as they realise this vision.

There is a relaxed, welcoming ethos at the school. Pupils come into the school calmly and ready to learn; no time is wasted. The well-being of staff and pupils is at the heart of the school's success. This is an inclusive school where learning is matched to the needs of all pupils, whatever their starting points, and where no child is turned away, no matter how complex the needs of the child.

The great majority of parents are very happy with the school and speak proudly of the welcoming approach of the leadership team and the improvements in the school over the past few years, in behaviour and attitudes as well as in academic achievement.

Attainment is strong in early years and key stage 1 and very strong by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards overall at the end of each key stage are well above the national averages. In addition, the overall progress that pupils make from their different starting points by the end of key stage 2 is significantly above national averages and has been for the past three years. I wanted to check whether this high standard can be seen across the wider curriculum and if the well-being of pupils is given as high a priority as academic success. Disadvantaged pupils are achieving very slightly below national averages in reading at key stage 1 and are not reaching standards at greater depth. These were my areas for enquiry.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Secure systems and processes are in place and, as a result, all staff know how to report any safeguarding concerns. As a team, you follow up any issues carefully and swiftly, working well with external agencies to protect pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders complete the required checks to ensure that all staff are suitable to work in the school. These checks are recorded on the single central record, which is updated and monitored regularly by leaders and governors.

You make sure that all staff receive regular and appropriate safeguarding training that supports their understanding of the current statutory guidance. You remind staff frequently about their duties in regard to the safeguarding of pupils. There is a rolling programme of staff training in place. This means that all staff are kept fully aware of the risks that pupils may be facing, such as online. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. They are confident that you and your staff will keep them safe and respond promptly to any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to check what leaders have put in place to help learners to catch up more rapidly with their peers nationally by the end of key stage 1 in reading, particularly for disadvantaged children.
- Together we looked at learning in Reception and key stage 1. Opportunities for reading were seen in all classes. These led to well-planned writing activities with strong outcomes. All the lessons we saw were skilfully linked to the wider curriculum. Children in Reception were using a globe to locate India and then using this as a starting point for their discussions in preparation for their writing. The small number of disadvantaged pupils are a clear priority and are a focus for all teachers. This is a target on your school improvement plan. Work in books is of a high standard, and the disadvantaged pupils I saw were working at age-related expectations.
- Reading is given a high priority in the school, and all children in Nursery and Reception have one-to-one reading daily until they are confident to read more fluently. The school provides a range of activities for parents to encourage home reading, and progress is rapid from individual starting points.
- By the end of key stage 1 this year, the school has achieved even higher rates of progress and attainment, with more pupils achieving at greater depth in reading, several of whom are disadvantaged pupils.
- My next line of enquiry was to find out whether leaders have ensured that the high standards and progress achieved in mathematics and English can be seen across the wider curriculum.
- I looked at outcomes from a range of project folders, English books, photographs, as well as videos of activities and performances, to see evidence of rich curriculum provision. Pupils have access to authors, professionals and specialists and a range of visits, which helps to bring their learning to life. This curriculum is providing many opportunities for extended writing, often linked to English, which supports their learning and results in strong progress. Pupils in Year 4 were able to explain clearly to me how they had taken part in a local art project, which had offered them choices about the work of the artist who they would study. They were knowledgeable and could speak articulately about the work of the artists and evaluate it intelligently. Your vision for learners to think more deeply and become experts is paying dividends. There is clear evidence that this curriculum is having a very positive impact on outcomes in all subjects. Pupils are fully immersed in activities that inspire them, resulting in excellent outcomes, learning behaviour and attitudes. Pupils, particularly younger pupils, are not always able to identify the individual subjects they are studying, such as geography, within their cross-curricular projects. This is an aspect that is being addressed.
- Assessments are robust and thorough. Middle leaders are ensuring that all expectations of the national curriculum are covered. Middle leaders monitor outcomes and write an evaluation of their subject which contributes to the school's self-evaluation and development plan. Tailored professional development is a priority to ensure that they lead their subjects effectively.

- Your senior leaders showed me how their work is developing in line with the new education inspection framework for September. They are checking that all aspects of the curriculum, over time, are even more coherent and cumulative, so that pupils' knowledge is consistent in all subjects and prepares them fully for secondary school.
- My final line of enquiry was to find out how leaders are ensuring the well-being of pupils across the school and how well pupils behave. I also wanted to check whether you have developed a more systematic and consultative approach with parents, as this was identified as an area for improvement at your last inspection.
- Pupils are confident and friendly. You know all the pupils by name, and they chatted freely with you as we walked through the school. The learning culture in the school is purposeful. Pupils talk and learn collaboratively. Those with complex needs are educated appropriately according to their specific need. You have a learning mentor who supports pupils with a range of difficulties. This work is carefully monitored by your inclusion leader and is effective. You work with a local pupil referral unit and, through working together, have integrated pupils successfully into Ainslie Wood.
- Pupils with whom I spoke told me how much they love reading and enjoy the fantastic projects they do. They are clear that any issues are dealt with swiftly and resolved and that the school is very safe. All classes move to their next teacher and classroom for the last 2 weeks of the year, ensuring that relationships are established and that teachers know their pupils in time for a strong start in September. The emotional well-being of pupils is at the heart of this, with the aim of reducing anxiety over the summer break.
- All the parents with whom I spoke praised the care and support their children receive. They also commented on the excellent communication between the school and parents. A wide range of parent workshops has enhanced parents' engagement. There is an effective parent partnership body, which has raised substantial funds to support planned school improvements. A very small minority of parents remain less happy with the school; I looked at a range of evidence, which assured me that leaders have worked with great care and commitment to resolve issues.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders can evidence pupils' progress across the wider curriculum more accurately and ensure that knowledge builds in each subject through the school
- pupils have a clear understanding of the subjects they are studying within the school's broad curriculum and can articulate how subjects link together.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Ladipo
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, your deputy and assistant headteachers and your chair of governors. We discussed the school's evaluation of itself as well as the actions leaders have taken to maintain and improve the good quality of education. I visited all classrooms, together with the headteacher, looking at teaching and pupils' work. I observed and talked to pupils as they were learning. I also looked, with leaders, at a wide range of examples of pupils' work and assessment information to evaluate their outcomes over time. I reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation and the single central record of vetting checks on staff. I met with eight pupils, four members of the middle leadership team and your school improvement partner. I scrutinised a range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and the Ainslie Wood leadership toolkit. I considered the views of parents through the 66 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire Parent View. There were 26 responses from staff to Ofsted's surveys. All were overwhelmingly positive.