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Mr Gary Murrell
Executive Headteacher
Marlborough Primary School
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Dear Mr Murrell

Short inspection of Marlborough Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 2019 with Paula Craigie, 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

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

You, your leaders, governors and staff have all been successful in realising the school's vision to 'engage, motivate, challenge and support' pupils. There is a positive, inclusive climate for learning in the school. Staff enjoy working at Marlborough. Pupils experience success, irrespective of their abilities or different starting points. Pupils are proud of their achievements and of their school.

Pupils are hard-working and diligent. They are resilient and not afraid to take risks or make mistakes. They understand from staff that this is the way they learn best. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming. Their behaviour is good, and staff have motivated pupils to attend regularly. Attendance has improved over time, and is now in line with the national average. Almost all parents and carers who spoke to inspectors, and those who completed the online questionnaire, were positive about the school.

You and the governors responded constructively to the challenges presented by the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. You have sought appropriate external advice, and have responded positively to the support received from and brokered by the local authority.

You have successfully implemented and developed a new leadership structure under your inspiring, highly effective leadership.

Leaders have ensured that pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics remains a strength of the school's work. You have recently secured strong leadership of writing across the school. This is leading to noticeable improvements in pupils' progress in some classes. Your 'connected curriculum' provides pupils with a broad range of subjects brought together through interesting topics and inspiring literature.

Overall, teaching is improving, and much of it leads to good or better outcomes for pupils. Teachers are committed to developing and enhancing their skills. However, there is further work to be done to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching across key stage 2. While the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving, there are still pockets of underachievement, which need to be addressed.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They have maintained rigorous, detailed records for vulnerable pupils, and make sure that external services and advice are sought, when appropriate. Staff, leaders and governors are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that staff are well briefed on risks within the local community.

Governors ensure that all appropriate checks are made during the recruitment of staff. The site is secure and safe. Staff are vigilant. For example, in the early years space, staff keep a constant check that children enjoy the free-flow provision and use equipment safely.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in evidence across the school. This is because of the calm, caring and nurturing environment which you and your staff have established.

Inspection findings

- Our first focus for this inspection was to consider how well teaching meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils in the school. This was because progress in writing in the recent past has been weaker for these pupils. In 2018, only 52% of your disadvantaged pupils left the school attaining the combined expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. We tested out whether the pupil premium funding is being spent effectively to support the needs of disadvantaged pupils.
- You and your leadership team know your pupils well and assess their individual progress thoroughly. Some of your disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In addition, some of these pupils have other vulnerabilities in relation to their family circumstances. Consequently, you use some of your funding to support pupils' social and emotional well-being and development. This is to build self-esteem and to ensure that pupils have a positive attitude to learning. When appropriate, you target funding effectively to support pupils' speech and language development.

- You identify pupils who underachieve through regular pupil progress meetings and work scrutinies. You target additional support thoughtfully and effectively. Inspection evidence showed that there is very little difference between the progress that disadvantaged pupils and others make in Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers share your high expectations for all pupils, and pupils respond positively to teachers' feedback to improve their work. However, some differences in pupils' achievement are still evident within key stage 2. This links to pockets of weaker teaching which you have identified in your own evaluations of teaching and learning.
- Our next focus was to review the progress that pupils make in writing. Pupils who left the school at the end of Year 6, 2018, made progress which was well above the national average in reading and mathematics. Their progress was average in writing. Since the previous inspection, leadership of writing has gained considerable strength, and is having a noticeable impact on pupils' achievement in writing. Throughout the school, there are examples of beautifully presented and constructed writing, ranging from recipes to debates, and writing in role as historical characters.
- The school's information about the progress pupils make, together with the work seen in books, shows that the Year 6 pupils have made stronger progress than last year's cohort. Year 2 pupils are making good progress this year. Progress is less consistent in Years 3 and 4. However, teachers who have received individual subject support have benefited from the input. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- The inspection focused on the effectiveness of governors in supporting leaders to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Governance is strong. Governors were instrumental in ensuring that the new leadership structure evolved and that roles were designed to have maximum impact on improving pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching. They rightly believed that you would provide excellent overall leadership and would develop and support leadership at all levels. This also exemplifies your collective commitment to improving education for pupils beyond Marlborough.
- Governors know the school well. They are well trained, highly committed and reflective. They value external challenge, and this reflects the culture of learning evident in all aspects of the school's work. Governors' roles in addressing key aspects of improvement work are clear. They undertake a range of activities to engage leaders and parents, and hold leaders to account.
- During the inspection, we explored ways in which leaders and teachers support pupils' achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics. We found that the revised curriculum has been implemented well. Provision for science, physical education, religious education and history has been enhanced since the time of the previous inspection. There are innovative plans to strengthen technology. Pupils said that they enjoy their learning. The sample of books and learning logs reviewed by inspectors showed that pupils benefit from teaching in a range of subjects. There is a good variety of work in a range of subjects displayed across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching is routinely strong across key stage 2, and leads to improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Dollner
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with you, the head of school, the deputy headteacher and other leaders. I met with four governors, including the chair of governors, and I met with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors made visits to lessons, accompanied by you and other leaders. Inspectors undertook a curriculum walk with pupils. Inspectors took account of 46 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Documents were considered. These included published test results, the school improvement plan and the school's self-evaluation. I reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures. I also considered information about pupils' progress and attendance, which you shared with me. A sample of pupils' books was reviewed.