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Miss Julie Howarth
Executive Headteacher
Wendell Park Primary School
Cobbold Road
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Dear Miss Howarth

Short inspection of Wendell Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2017, 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

There have been significant changes in the leadership of the school since the last inspection. In 2014, you became the executive headteacher in order to support the governing body, which was unable to recruit a headteacher. Since your appointment, you have created an effective leadership team whose members share your vision and commitment to the school's priorities. As a result, there is strong capacity to secure further improvement for the benefit of your pupils. Similarly, you have developed effective links with your partner school to further develop the quality of teaching and learning by sharing specialist teachers in English and mathematics. This has led to an increase in the rates of pupils' progress across the school since the school's previous inspection.

Parents are very positive about the school. Their comments, and those of staff, echo your identified strengths of the school, which include the early years, the strong sense of community and the level of care provided to the pupils. One parent shared the view of several: 'The teachers in the Nursery Year are knowledgeable and experienced, resulting in excellent pastoral care and driven young children who are eager to learn.' Pupils are also very positive about the school. They are polite as well as eager to share and discuss pieces of work of which they are particularly proud.

In the school's last inspection report, it was recommended that leaders improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make and sustain rapid progress in all subjects. Although there have been changes to school staffing, you have successfully maintained a focus on developing and sustaining high-quality teaching. This is reflected in the significant progress made in the last two years. With your senior leaders, you continue to refine teaching and learning to secure improvements in specific aspects of writing and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safeguarding culture in the school is strong. Visitors are required to read and sign detailed safeguarding information on arrival. This ensures that everyone on the school premises is informed about safeguarding procedures. Training for staff and governors is regular so that they all have a good understanding of the most recent safeguarding legislation. Recent training for parents and governors, delivered by the designated safeguarding leader, covered the sensitive but important aspects of the 'Prevent' duty and female genital mutilation. This has made a positive difference to parents and has resulted in further engagement to discuss these aspects in more depth. Detailed records show that staff know how to report concerns and that the school works closely with a range of agencies to support pupils and their parents. For example, the designated leader for safeguarding has worked closely with the local authority's early help team to support vulnerable families.

Pupils say that staff make them feel safe in school. The curriculum provides a range of learning opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe. Pupils can talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe online. School leaders organise regular safety talks with the local police, for example on street safety, to help pupils keep safe when outside school. School records show that the numbers of exclusions and incidents of poor behaviour are decreasing. Pupils say that staff act quickly to address behaviour concerns.

Inspection findings

- We agreed to look first at how effectively leaders are accelerating progress in writing at key stage 1. For the last two years, the proportion of pupils achieving the age-expected standards has been lower than for other schools nationally. You have already identified writing as a school priority, and leaders have introduced an effective reading approach, which is linked to writing, in order to develop pupils' writing skills. In addition, senior leaders have placed a greater emphasis on the teaching of vocabulary, punctuation and grammar. Pupils now practise speaking in full sentences before starting to write. This helps them to structure their sentences correctly and record their ideas accurately.
- In our visits to lessons, we saw teachers effectively demonstrating whole-sentence speaking using a range of grammatical features. Teachers also provided clear guidance to help develop pupils' vocabulary. This supported pupils in making decisions about what to write to engage the reader. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils, including the disadvantaged, are making good progress. As a

result, school information suggests that a greater proportion of current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve the standard related to their age.

- Pupils write for a range of purposes and have lots of opportunities to practise their writing skills well across different subjects. However, occasionally, teachers do not always make the most of opportunities to reinforce phonics learning, grammar and punctuation skills in English and other subjects.
- Pupils' low attainment in the 2016 key stage 1 assessments indicated that they had made slow progress from their broadly average starting points at the end of the Reception Year. Together we explored the reasons for this. School information shows that a sizeable number of these pupils joined the school in Year 2. Leaders quickly identified these pupils' individual barriers to learning and the support they needed in order to catch up. As a result, these pupils are making good gains in their writing and are developing the necessary age-related skills and understanding.
- We also focused on the progress of disadvantaged children in the early years. In 2016, the proportion of these children achieving a good level of development was below that achieved by other children nationally. This was also the case in reading, writing and mathematics. School information shows that many of these children had additional needs and, consequently, started school with skills and understanding below those expected for their age. Well-tailored support ensured that they made good progress in the early years. You have ensured that this support has continued in Year 1 so that these children catch up with their peers. Current Year 1 assessment information and work in pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils are making considerable progress and a higher proportion are now working at the expected standards.
- Leaders in the early years know the children well and assess any barriers to learning so that children receive support targeted to meet their needs. This was clearly evident when we visited the Reception classes. For example, the teacher's effective questioning encouraged boys to apply their phonic knowledge to their writing when labelling animals. Learning journals show that disadvantaged children are making good progress, particularly in their spoken language, from single words to whole-sentence speaking, and in writing, using their phonic knowledge.
- We then agreed to look at how leaders are accelerating progress for the most able pupils at key stage 2 so that more are challenged in their thinking and gain a deeper understanding of mathematics. Senior leaders have evaluated the gaps in pupils' learning and, as a result, have restructured mathematics lessons to include more opportunities for these pupils to develop their reasoning skills. Teachers have been supported effectively by the specialist teacher who works alongside them and provides expert coaching. As a result, teachers are more confident in teaching this aspect of mathematics.
- The focus on reasoning was clear in our visits to classes where teachers provided opportunities for pupils to explain their approach to problem solving. Pupils spoken to, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, explained that they enjoyed the challenges at the end of their learning activities. Work in pupils' books reflects the increasing opportunities given to pupils to develop their

reasoning skills and think about their mathematics more deeply. Nevertheless, there are instances where the most able complete activities that do not stretch their skills and understanding quickly enough. As a result, they are not fully challenged. Assessment information for these pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, shows an increase in the proportion working at greater depth. This is because a high proportion of these pupils have made great strides in their progress this year. You agree that the changes to extend the most able pupils in mathematics have still to be fully established.

- Finally, we discussed the actions leaders are taking to improve the attendance and persistent absence of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those eligible for free school meals. Half of the pupils on the special educational needs register also have medical needs, and many miss school regularly due to illness. Their absence has a negative impact on the overall attendance and persistent absence figures for these groups. School leaders monitor the attendance of pupils and work together with families so that their children attend school as much as possible. They work closely with the local authority's early help team and consequently attendance and persistent absence figures for these pupils have improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on recent strategies to maximise progress for the most able pupils in mathematics at key stage 2
- opportunities to reinforce grammar, punctuation and spelling are consistently applied in writing in all subjects in key stage 1 so that pupils make as much progress as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen Ridding
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The following activities were undertaken to explore the key lines of enquiry during the inspection:

- I discussed the work of the school with you and the deputy headteachers at the start of the inspection and throughout the day.
- I considered the responses from staff and pupils and those parents and carers who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey.
- I met with two groups of pupils to discuss their learning and safety.
- I met with a group of governors.
- I met the school business manager and two deputy headteachers to discuss aspects of safeguarding.
- I visited classrooms and looked at pupils' work with you and your deputy headteachers.
- I listened to pupils read from Years 2, 5 and 6.
- I met with a representative from the local authority.
- I met with a group of leaders to discuss mathematics, writing and the early years.
- I considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website.