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Mr Nick Hague
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hague

Short inspection of Marnar Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 February 2017 with Jeffery Quaye, 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 November 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Senior leaders responded effectively to the issues raised in the previous report and subsequent monitoring inspection in September 2014. Standards in mathematics are higher and safeguarding policies are fully up to date and more accessible to parents.

You took up the post of headteacher in September 2016. Since then, you have worked with great determination and effort to maintain and improve the good quality of education in the school. You have established a strong partnership with the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Staff share your vision to improve outcomes for all pupils further. Governors know the school well. They offer you effective support and are prepared to challenge leaders where they believe more can be achieved.

Your initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school was thorough and has led to a detailed improvement plan. This aims to build on what has been achieved since the previous inspection and focuses on the correct areas. These include providing more effectively for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as raising standards in writing. There is improvement in these areas, although some developments need longer to be fully effective. You have identified and tackled weaker teaching and supported teachers to improve their practice through good professional development.

Teachers' responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire show that morale is high and that staff have responded well to recent changes. Staff who have taken on additional or different responsibilities have been well supported so that they are effective in their new roles.

The school is a pleasant place for everyone to work. Staff and pupils are welcoming and are clearly proud of their school. Pupils behave well and show high levels of confidence. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff are good role models and demonstrate the values of respect for others and the rule of law. Pupils trust adults to look after them and keep them safe. Pupils are keen to talk about the work they are doing and are enthusiastic about their learning. They say that they enjoy subjects such as reading and mathematics as well as having the chance to try out a range of other activities, including the climbing wall.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school responded very positively to the recommendations of the monitoring visit that focused on safeguarding. Since your appointment, you have strengthened further the safeguarding culture in the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is updated regularly and is based on the latest statutory guidance. Staff have very clear guidance on all aspects of safeguarding so that they know how to identify signs that indicate a child may be at risk, for example from sexual exploitation or radicalisation. They know what to do should any concerns arise, and detailed records show that swift action is taken when necessary. The school works in close partnership with outside agencies to keep pupils safe from harm.

You provide good guidance to help parents know how to keep their children safe. The school website gives very accessible and detailed information, particularly on e-safety, and is supplemented by workshops for parents. Governors have been fully involved in promoting close links with parents. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe as staff regularly discuss this with them. With older pupils, the school uses work in different subjects, as well as personal, social and health education and religious education, to help to develop pupils' understanding of some difficult issues. For example, in Year 6, reading 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' led to discussions on the dangers of extremism. Pupils of all ages know what constitutes bullying and what to do if any bullying happens. They are confident that staff will support and help them. School records show that the relatively few incidents of bullying are dealt with robustly.

Inspection findings

- Good attendance is strongly promoted and the school has worked effectively to ensure that pupils, and their parents, know why it is so important to attend school regularly.

- As a result of action taken, attendance has improved since the previous inspection and the amount of persistent absence has reduced. The school can demonstrate that the improvement in attendance has led to better attainment and progress, both for individual pupils and in the school as a whole.
- The rate of improvement in attendance has not been as fast as the school would like. Leaders understand that they need to be more rigorous in their approach and implement the changes they propose more rapidly if they are to ensure that attendance is at least in line with the national average.
- You made improving the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities a high priority because over time, these pupils were not making as much progress as others. The recent review identified several key areas for improvement. You have already improved the quality of the additional support, with the result that pupils are making better progress than before.
- In reading and mathematics, current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress. Teaching is well matched to their needs and additional adults give them good support in class. Progress in writing has not been as rapid because teachers' expectations have not been as consistently high.
- Senior staff are leading a drive to improve the quality of writing across the school and in all subjects. Teachers give pupils better guidance on what is expected when writing for different purposes.
- The impact of this is seen in the planning of tasks that interest pupils and encourage them to want to write. In key stage 1, teachers' strong emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary and oral skills is helping pupils to become more confident writers.
- Although progress is evident, initiatives have not had enough time to show that they can fully deliver the improvements expected. In some classes, pupils have good opportunities to practise their skills and to write in greater depth in other curriculum subjects, but this is not happening consistently in all classes.
- Standards in reading have improved over the last year and it is clear from discussions with pupils that most of them enjoy reading. Younger as well as older pupils could talk knowledgeably about the books they had read and why they liked them.
- Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 receive a good grounding in phonics. This enables them to read unfamiliar words accurately, but some, particularly younger boys, do not always fully understand what they are reading. Staff have been focusing on developing pupils' comprehension skills so that they read with greater understanding. So far, the evidence shows that this is working well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they improve attendance further by rapidly implementing the school's plans
- pupils have more opportunities to apply and develop their writing skills in greater depth in subjects other than English.

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

Yours sincerely

Grace Marriott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- held meetings with you, your leadership team and some other staff, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority
- observed learning and scrutinised pupils' work with you and senior leaders
- during our visits to lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and listened to them read
- considered the school's survey of parents' views, spoke to parents informally before school and attended a reading workshop
- considered 37 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire
- held discussions with two groups of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6
- scrutinised documentation including: the school self-evaluation; assessment and behaviour information; the single central record of pre-employment checks; records relating to safeguarding, including incident logs; teachers' performance management information; information about the work of the governing body; and pupils' attendance information.