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Mrs Laura Morgan
Headteacher
Miss Roxanne Gumbs
Acting Headteacher
Downe Manor Primary School
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Dear Mrs Morgan and Miss Gumbs

Short inspection of Downe Manor Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 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 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. The school continues to improve under the leadership of the substantive headteacher, currently on maternity leave, and the leadership of the acting headteacher. The leadership team has successfully created an environment where expectations are consistently high and pupils are motivated and continue to thrive, academically and in their personal development. Staff, governors and parents share your ambition.

Middle leaders know their subjects well and continue to strengthen their roles in monitoring the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. In this way, they contribute well to the capacity of the school to improve further. You provide effective support, training and challenge to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is always improving. You have established a positive learning culture where the staff are committed, have high expectations of pupils' outcomes and are very supportive of the leadership team.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are courteous, polite and respectful towards adults and each other. They behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are eager to learn and are proud of their school and achievements. They develop good citizenship skills, being keen to take on responsibilities such as school councillors, head boy and head girl, sport monitors and playground buddies.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, mainly because you have been effective in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers use improved assessments well to plan teaching that engages pupils and supports their learning. Leaders track pupils' progress closely and frequently to identify those who are not making the progress that they should. They then provide timely and effective support. You share information with governors regularly, including the progress that pupils make. As a result, governors know the school's main strengths and areas for development. They provide senior leaders with the necessary support and challenge to bring about improvements.

You have successfully improved the level of engagement with parents through seeking their views by conducting periodic surveys, setting up a parents' forum and providing them with greater opportunities to engage with staff. Parents who responded to the Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were supportive of the school's leadership and used words such as 'outstanding', 'excellent' and 'amazing' to describe the school and staff.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team, including governors, has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and are fit for purpose. Staff receive regular training so that they kept fully up to date on safeguarding; as a result, they know how to keep pupils safe. All the procedures on recruitment and vetting are thorough and maintained systematically. Records on safeguarding are detailed and of high quality. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to keep them safe. You work well with vulnerable families to ensure the safety and welfare of their children. You ensure that referrals are made in a timely manner, and followed up and dealt with effectively. Overall, your arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are robust and the culture of safeguarding practice is strong.

Pupils told me that they always feel safe at school. They are taught well about how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet and from cyber bullying. All parents who responded to the online Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are kept safe.

Inspection findings

- The first focus for this inspection, which we agreed on, was how effective leaders are in improving pupils' skills in reading. This was especially so for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able in key stage 2 and boys in key stage 1. At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils achieved above those of a similar age at the expected standard in all key subjects. However, attainment in reading was weaker than in writing and mathematics. You identified reading as one of your areas for improvement and your actions, including small-group and one-to-one support for those falling behind, are having a marked impact on improving pupils' progress in reading. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and their love for reading is growing. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils in Year 6 read with

fluency, expression and pleasure. Pupils read widely and often, including in their daily reading lessons and at home, as their reading records show. Pupils have access to a range of books to capture their interest. They said that their teachers test their understanding of the books they have read, before moving them on to more-challenging text.

- The effective teaching of phonics is providing pupils with skills to read difficult or unfamiliar words. The standard achieved by pupils in their phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2016 was above average. Your information on current pupils and the quality of reading in lessons indicates that disadvantaged pupils, most-able pupils in key stage 2 and boys in key stage 1 are making good progress in reading.
- The second focus of this inspection was on pupils' writing, especially middle-attaining boys at key stage 2 and girls at the expected level of development at key stage 1. Pupils' writing is improving across the school. It is displayed and celebrated in classrooms and corridors. Pupils write for different purposes and have access to good-quality text. Boys in key stage 2 classes, including the middle-attaining boys, are thoroughly engaged in their writing. They present their work well and reflect on what they have written to improve. Boys in one of the classes wrote some highly descriptive story openers and their books show marked improvement in their handwriting over time. Additional support for girls in Year 3 who did not do well in their writing previously has improved their writing skills. However, in some classes pupils are provided with activities that require shorter responses. Pupils do not routinely write at length to improve their writing skills. Sometimes, pupils make spelling mistakes that go uncorrected.
- The third focus of this inspection explored how leaders are improving the progress of boys in mathematics at key stage 1, particularly those whose progress is not yet good. In 2016, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception was broadly average. At the end of key stage 1, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. The results in reading were stronger than in writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils achieving at the expected level from the end of Reception to Year 2 was below the expected standard in mathematics. My observations confirmed that boys in key stage 1 were equally as engaged as girls in their learning. Their books show that they can solve a range of calculations, including word problems relating to everyday mathematics. Occasionally, some pupils, particularly the lower-attaining pupils, do not complete their work before they move on to a different mathematical concept. This leaves gaps in their knowledge and understanding. You have, quite rightly, identified this as an areas of focus.
- My final line of enquiry looked at attendance rates. Although overall attendance is broadly average, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been below average. You and your staff have worked well to improve attendance through your work with parents. Although attendance has improved for disadvantaged pupils, current attendance for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains below average. This is mainly to do with some parents taking

their children on extended holidays. You have, quite rightly, targeted this as an area for improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils regularly write at length to improve their writing skills and are encouraged to improve their spelling skills
- pupils consolidate their learning in mathematics, particularly the lower-attainers, before moving on to the next mathematical concept
- the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is as good as the majority of 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 Ealing. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Avtar Sherri
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, middle leaders, and leaders of the speech and language unit, as well as the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I held a telephone discussion with a local authority representative. I also met a group of pupils from key stage 2.
- I visited classes, mainly in key stages 1 and 2, and observed learning in lessons with leaders, looked at pupils' books and heard pupils read.
- The school's information on attendance, safeguarding, recruitment procedures, and pupils' progress was also scrutinised.
- I took into account the views of 37 responses to Parent View, 34 responses to the staff survey and 67 responses to the pupil survey.