

1 May 2018

Karen Steele
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Dear Mrs Steele

Short inspection of Gresham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 2018, 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 March 2014.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment in April 2017, you have set high expectations of pupils and staff. Your vision of a fully rounded education for pupils is realised through a commitment to high standards, as well as access to an enriched curriculum. Leaders and teachers provide pupils with a wide range of activities which enhance their experience of the school's curriculum. One parent typically commented, 'a truly lovely school with supportive staff who go above and beyond to give children opportunities in sports, music and the arts'.

The leadership team is united in ensuring that standards, and support for pupils, continue to improve. Your new approach to some areas of teaching and learning is helping to ensure that pupils receive a high-quality experience in their educational journey through the school. In previous years, pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 achieved standards in line with, and in some instances above, national averages. Current pupils in school are making strong progress, as reflected in the assessment information available during this inspection. However, most-able readers need to be stretched and challenged to ensure that a higher proportion of them achieve at greater depth.

Leaders have dealt successfully with the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You now ensure that teachers use assessment information

accurately when planning for learning activities. Work in books shows that teachers take into account what pupils already know to move them on in their learning. You have also ensured that the guidance pupils receive from teachers is clear and timely. Pupils across the school talk about how they are able to improve their work because of the effective help they get from their teachers.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the varied learning opportunities on offer. They are extremely polite and well mannered. They take great pride in helping each other and contributing to the school community. Pupils behave well in class, in the playgrounds and as they move around the school. The school is a calm and orderly environment. Pupils' work is proudly on display for all to see and enjoy.

The governing body provides leaders with effective support and challenge. Governors are knowledgeable and regularly check the actions taken by leaders to secure improvements. They fulfil their strategic role effectively. They scrutinise the information provided to them by the school. They talk confidently about how they ensure that the assessment information they receive is reliable and valid.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including governors, have ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff and governors keep up to date with training. They know what to do to keep pupils safe. Records relating to the safeguarding of pupils are detailed, organised and fit for purpose. School leaders and staff know their pupils well. They are effective at identifying specific risks and issues that may have an impact on school life. Governors regularly check the school's safeguarding records, including the suitability of staff to work with children.

Pupils are safe and happy in school. They say that poor behaviour is rare but, when it does happen, staff deal with it quickly and fairly. Pupils feel well cared for by staff in school. They are taught about potential risks and how to stay safe in different situations. These include how to use the internet safely, safety in case of fire and dangers from strangers.

Inspection findings

- For the first line of enquiry, we agreed to look at pupils' achievement in reading, particularly with regard to the most able pupils. For the last two years, pupils' progress in reading at the end of key stage 2 was close to the national average. However, a much-lower proportion of the most able pupils achieved greater depth in reading. You are aware of this and you have put in place some effective actions to address this.
- You have reviewed your approach to the teaching of reading across the school. Teachers have created plenty of opportunities for pupils to read high-quality texts. When pupils read, they use a wide range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. They derive genuine pleasure from reading and talking enthusiastically about their book choices. You have also put in place effective strategies to

develop the more sophisticated skills of inference and deduction. In some instances, teachers probe pupils' understanding of texts very effectively.

- However, overall, your strategy to improve the achievement that the most able pupils make in reading is still at its early stages. Although pupils are now more confident when explaining their understanding of texts, they are still not stretched and challenged enough to deepen their skills. As a result, the most able pupils do not consistently demonstrate reading at greater depth.
- We also agreed to look at mathematics across the school. Attainment and progress in mathematics overall were strong in 2016 and 2017. However, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in this subject was lower than the national average.
- Across the school, pupils use a variety of mathematical vocabulary accurately in their work, and they make strong progress in developing their problem-solving skills. This is because of the plentiful opportunities that pupils are given to reason mathematically. Class teachers are effective at probing pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.
- It is evident in their work in books that pupils, including the most able pupils, benefit from opportunities to practise and consolidate arithmetic skills to achieve mastery. They show strong calculation skills. They are able to apply these skills across different areas of mathematics. As a result, current assessment information shows that there is now a higher proportion of pupils working at greater depth in mathematics.
- Finally, we looked at the breadth of the curriculum. You, your staff and the governing body recognise the vital role the curriculum plays in enabling pupils to achieve well. Aside from the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics, there are many opportunities for pupils to engage in enriched activities across the curriculum.
- There is a clear sequence of lessons, which enables pupils to acquire deep understanding of significant events and periods in history. They regularly analyse historical objects, articles and events. Pupils engage in activities which include understanding timelines, observing artefacts in detail and researching significant people in history. As a result, they make strong progress in this area of the curriculum.
- In science, pupils engage in activities which develop their scientific knowledge well. They have looked at understanding of how the human body works, at ways of classifying animals according to different criteria and at differentiating habitats. The development of scientific enquiry skills is well planned across the year groups.
- The teaching of music is a strength. Children in the early years foundation stage explore rhymes and rhythms. Pupils in key stage 1 receive specialist teaching of singing skills and they are taught to play recorders. Pupils' appreciation of music continues as they progress through the school. There are opportunities for them to learn how to play violin, cello, piano and djembe drums.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a higher proportion of the most able pupils in key stage 2 achieve at greater depth in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Edison David
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and with members of the senior leadership team. I also considered 96 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I analysed 94 responses to the pupil survey and 31 responses to the staff survey. I spoke to a number of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe and their views on learning and behaviour in general. I held discussions with a representative of the local authority. I met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I also considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website. I looked at the single central record and the school's analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with school leaders, I visited classes to observe learning and I looked at samples of pupils' work across all subjects. I listened to pupils read from across the ability range.