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Ms Melissa Loosemore
Headteacher
Roe Green Junior School
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Dear Ms Loosemore

Short inspection of Roe Green Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 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.

You have ensured that there is a strong ethos in the school to help pupils gain in self-confidence and develop into responsible and active citizens. You aspire to support pupils in becoming successful learners, achieving well academically. Staff morale is high, and members of staff are fully committed to all that you wish to achieve.

You, ably assisted by your deputy and the two more recently appointed assistant headteachers, have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. In 2016, the overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved on the previous year from slightly below national average to slightly above. Nevertheless, you accurately identified that disadvantaged pupils are not making sufficient progress and that, especially in writing, not enough of the most able pupils are reaching the higher standard. Equally, you are aware that the recent rise in pupils' absence needs tackling.

The previous inspection report recommended that leaders raise standards, improve systems for checking pupils' progress and for setting targets. Inspectors also said that the governors should be more rigorous in monitoring the school's work and ensuring that all policies and procedures are implemented.

In the new national end of key stage 2 assessments introduced last year, the proportions of pupils at the school reaching the expected standards in reading and writing were average, and in mathematics above average. Leaders now set every pupil an ambitious target for making at least good progress. Leaders have also devised an effective system to check on pupils' progress in relation to the new age-related expectations. Leaders use the information well to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. As a result, standards are rising.

New governors joined the board during the last two years and appointed the new chair 18 months ago. Governors have devised rigorous systems to check on all aspects of the school's work and to improve their own effectiveness. They are thus very well informed; they hold leaders to account and ensure that all statutory requirements are in place. Consequently, they are making a strong contribution in driving continuous improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Members of staff have a good understanding of the latest guidance on safeguarding. They are aware of the potential risks, such as physical abuse, female genital mutilation and radicalisation. They are vigilant and aware of what they need to do should they have any concerns.

Leaders work closely with a range of agencies, including social services and the police, to promote pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils also learn how to stay safe in different situations. Additionally, the school employs a counsellor who offers support to pupils and their parents who may be having difficulties. Members of staff encourage pupils to share any concerns through regular circle-time discussions.

Leaders and governors have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are appropriately detailed.

Inspection findings

- I explored how well leaders are diminishing the difference between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils nationally. Unvalidated 2016 assessments show that at the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than their peers and other pupils nationally in all subjects.
- Leaders identified diminishing this difference in progress as their top priority for improvement this year. They have set targets that are more ambitious for pupils. In addition, leaders have included improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils in teachers' appraisal objectives this year. The assistant headteachers and three other designated intervention teachers are delivering small-group or in-class support to help raise standards. Leaders are holding teachers to account for the progress of disadvantaged pupils at their termly pupil progress meeting. Governors, in turn, are holding leaders to account for the progress of this group.
- As a result, during the autumn term, your assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils made faster progress than their peers in reading across all year groups. This was also the case in writing, except in Year 6. In mathematics,

rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils were slightly below others in all year groups, except in Year 3, where they were above.

- I considered how well you are improving outcomes in writing, especially for the most able pupils. This is because, in 2016, the rate of progress of the most able pupils in writing was significantly below the national average. Only a very small number of pupils reached greater depth within the standard.
- You have made improving outcomes in writing a priority. The literacy leaders carefully analysed pupils' work at the end of the summer term to identify areas for improvement. Their findings informed their plans for improvement. The leaders trained teachers on how to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding. They have also devised clear guidance for all pupils on how to produce a good-quality piece of writing. Similarly, they provided additional specific assistance for the most able pupils, giving them tasks that are more challenging and aimed to help them reach a higher standard. The most able pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 have extra small-group sessions to help them write at greater depth. In Year 4, most-able pupils are receiving additional in-class support during their regular lessons. Currently, there is no similar extra support for disadvantaged pupils in Year 5. Leaders have plans to expand support to Year 5 in the near future.
- Consequently, the proportions of pupils reaching greater depth in writing at the end of the autumn term were higher than was previously the case in Years 3, 4 and 6. In Year 5, however, the figure is still low.
- I also looked at how effectively the school is reducing pupils' absence. In the past couple of years, rates of absence have risen from broadly average to slightly above average. Absence figures were particularly high for pupils eligible for free school meals and for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders and staff have taken effective action to reduce absence. The attendance officers make first-day contact with parents whenever a pupil is absent from school. They keep detailed records and now meet fortnightly with the local authority's education welfare officer to discuss pupils with attendance below 90%. Members of staff work effectively with parents to rectify the situation, drawing on additional support from the education welfare officer where necessary. When appropriate, the school now issues parents with warning letters. If there is no improvement, the local authority fines parents for not sending their children to school on a regular basis. The headteacher rewards pupils with 100% attendance at the end of each term.
- Absence figures from the start of the autumn term to date are lower, including for groups, than they were during the last academic year. The overall absence rate is once again in line with national averages for primary schools. Last year, 35 pupils were persistently absent. So far this year, the number has markedly reduced to 13 pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress of disadvantaged pupils consistently matches that of other pupils in the school and nationally
- teachers routinely support and challenge the most able pupils to reach higher standards in their writing.

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

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- meetings with senior leaders, the leaders of literacy, the chair of the governing body and two other governors and other members of staff
- joint visits to classrooms with the headteacher
- a range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about outcomes for groups of pupils, policy documentation, attendance records and information about safeguarding
- heard a group of pupils read and conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work
- considered 19 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 28 responses to the questionnaire for staff.