

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



12 February 2019

Ms Sarah Beard
Executive Headteacher
Bessemer Grange Primary School
Dylways
London
SE5 8HP

Dear Ms Beard

Short inspection of Bessemer Grange Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 January 2019 with Shelley Davies, 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have successfully addressed the areas identified at the previous inspection. The work to ensure that the most able achieve as highly as they can has been a school-wide focus. In most classes, teachers' questioning is well targeted and deepens pupils' understanding of the concepts they are taught. Where teaching is stronger, effective modelling by teachers develops pupils' responses well. Inspectors saw lessons where pupils' partner talk is used effectively to practise their answers out loud to complex questions. Books seen show that the most able pupils continue to make strong progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics across both key stages. You ensure that staff inspire pupils to work as hard as they can. As a result, pupils in the early years and key stage 1 attain well over time. Your commitment to securing pupils' academic success is evident. There are clear and focused plans for improvement, put in place following the disappointing outcomes in the 2018 key stage 2 assessments. Leaders have taken effective steps to improve pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. This was evident in the books seen through the inspection.

Leaders quickly identify staff potential. Investment in their training, to develop the right skills so that there is capacity in the curriculum leadership team, has been successful. The current group of middle leaders are well placed to support teachers with the school's revised curriculum. They know what they need to work on to ensure that the curriculum is representative of their community and challenges all pupils effectively. Leaders also ensure that staff new to their role or to the school are well supported.

Bessemer Grange is a happy, purposeful school. Staff, parents and carers, pupils and governors are all highly appreciative of leaders' inclusive work with families. They hold leaders in high regard. The large numbers of responses from parents to the online survey showed that they were extremely supportive of the school's work with families and that this supports their children. Parents feel that their views are listened to by staff. As one parent commented, 'I want to commend the school; they are doing an excellent job.' Pupils work hard and have very positive attitudes to their learning. In lessons, we saw they listen respectfully to each other's ideas. They take pride in their work, which is well presented in the core subjects books. They are proud to be pupils at the school.

Governors have a clear overview of the school's performance. They shared the leaders' disappointment at the dip in the 2018 key stage 2 results. They have supported leaders in their work to address this for the current Year 6. They make regular visits to the school to see it 'in action'. Governors' high-quality training has helped develop their skills to hold leaders to account more effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leaders, including governors, have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have developed an effective culture for safeguarding pupils. They have ensured that the safeguarding policy makes reference to the latest guidance. Governors regularly check the single central record. The school's safer recruitment practice is effective. Leaders ensure that all new staff have a full induction process that supports them when starting at Bessemer Grange. Staff are confident in using the school system when raising concerns. This ensures that no information is missed so that staff can support pupils and families effectively.

The school's strong pastoral care means pupils feel safe. Pupils told inspectors, 'Teachers take bullying seriously and stop it.' The large numbers of pupil responses to the online questionnaire also show that pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They appreciate how staff know them well and help them if they feel unhappy. Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn how to assess risks when using technology. The parents who responded to the Parent View survey agreed that their children feel safe in school.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry we considered was the progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding. This was because the 2018 Year 6 cohort made less progress across reading, writing and mathematics during key stage 2 compared to pupils in other schools.
- Leaders analysed the assessments from 2018 thoroughly. This cohort of pupils had an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They were also entitled to the pupil premium funding. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils exceeding the national standards for writing was above other pupils nationally. Leaders identified a group of disadvantaged pupils who had not made sufficient progress across key stage 2. Leaders swiftly

introduced changes to support disadvantaged pupils at risk of not meeting the end-of-year expectations. These programmes are regularly reviewed through pupil progress meetings and leaders' monitoring. Evidence in books showed these initiatives have been successful, particularly in mathematics.

- Classroom observations during the inspection show that there is little difference in access to the curriculum for different groups of pupils. Other adults are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning. As a result, lower prior attaining disadvantaged pupils make strong progress over time, particularly in mathematics. Leaders agree that there is some work still to do to make this more consistent in some year groups, particularly in writing.
- The second area we focused on was the progress boys make, because they had not achieved as well as girls in school, despite meeting national expectations in key stage 1.
- Leaders, including governors, have ensured that work to ensure that boys are engaged in their learning begins as soon as they enter the early years at Bessemer. Topics are now designed to interest boys as well as maintaining girls' engagement. For example, texts chosen support boys to develop a love of reading. Through the observations, we found that boys as well as girls respond well to teachers' challenging questions. Boys make gains in reading; this can be seen in the Year 1 phonics screening check. By the end of Year 2, the gap between boys' and girls' attainment narrows. Leaders have worked hard with teachers to better address this in key stage 2. Books seen show that there is little difference in the quality of work from boys compared to girls, particularly in mathematics. Pupil voice indicates that the leaders' work has been successful. In discussions with the inspector, they were clear about how teachers' feedback helped them to improve their work.
- The final line of enquiry we looked at was the provision in the curriculum for the ethnic groups of pupils from Black African and Black Caribbean heritage. This was because overall they had not achieved as well as other groups in school in the 2018 results in key stage 2.
- Leaders have undertaken a thorough curriculum review. This was to ensure that the broad range of subjects taught are planned progressively by teachers to build on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Resources are chosen carefully to ensure that ethnic groups are represented in texts and topics taught across the school. Planned events for the community, over the school year, give opportunities to share the school's diverse cultures. Leaders report these are well attended by all groups of parents. The school works with a number of outside agencies. This enables all pupils to access a more interesting range of enrichment activities. Forest school, where pupils use the outdoor environment to enhance their learning, is well developed. It is better used in the early years. Leaders are working to ensure that this is more widely used in the upper school.
- The environment clearly shows that learning is balanced through the range of attractive displayed work across the school. All groups of pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Books show that leaders have rightly identified more work needs to be done to ensure that pupils have the opportunities to extend their thinking and apply their skills in the core subjects through the wide range of

curriculum subjects. Through the book scrutiny, inspectors found that the quality of work seen in pupils' topic books was not as high as in the English and mathematics books. Leaders rightly identified that the high expectations in the core subjects need to be more evident in the foundation subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- progress made by disadvantaged pupils with lower prior attainment is more consistent across the school, particularly in writing, so that it is at least good
- teachers' curriculum planning, in the foundation subjects, gives pupils more opportunities to demonstrate the high expectations evident in the core subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Sara Morgan
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and your leadership team to discuss the impact of leaders' work to maintain the good quality of education. We held meetings with members of the governing body. We heard a number of pupils read and met with a group of pupils to talk about their learning. We visited classrooms. Some observations were made with senior leaders. We looked at samples of pupils' work. We met with a representative from the local authority and met with a group of middle leaders.

We reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school's current performance, their plans for further improvement and information on pupils' current progress. We considered a number of policy documents and records, including those related to safeguarding. The views of parents were considered through discussions at the beginning of the school day and the 183 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire (Parent View), including written comments. We also considered the 254 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils and the 23 staff responses.