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Annika Eadie
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Dear Ms Eadie

Short inspection of William Davis Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 May 2016, 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 July 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 were appointed as interim headteacher in September 2014, and confirmed in post in February 2015. You have made considerable changes in the school which have resulted in significant improvements in standards. You have tackled weak practice and successfully appointed new leaders and teachers. You have made sure that those who are new to their roles receive support and training so that they develop quickly.

Leaders and governors have reviewed and revised the vision and ethos of the school. This has resulted in a substantial shift in culture. The atmosphere is one of ambition and nurture. Parents have a more positive view of the school and demonstrate an increasing confidence in your leadership. Boundaries have been set and behaviour has improved. Pupils' attitudes to learning, however, vary. Sometimes they are enthusiastic and motivated, keen to do their best. At other times, they chat or stop paying attention because teachers do not have consistently high expectations with regard to pupils' behaviour.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Many of the current governing body have joined since then and bring relevant skills and experience to support leaders. Governors welcome opportunities for training and attend them regularly.

They have improved their understanding of information about pupils' progress and use this to hold leaders to account for their work.

Leaders have implemented a system which sets out what pupils are learning, and gives them feedback on how well they are doing. This system is consistently in place in all classes. However, the accuracy of feedback provided to pupils is not as reliable. As a result, pupils occasionally receive inaccurate or misleading responses to their work.

Safeguarding is effective.

As designated safeguarding lead you keep detailed, well-organised records of any concerns that arise. You note any actions taken and demonstrate a high degree of tenacity in following up issues with the relevant agencies. Leaders work closely with local secondary schools to make sure that any vulnerable pupils do not slip through the net during their transition to secondary education.

Leaders and governors have made sure that all members of staff receive up-to-date advice and training to help them identify any emerging concerns. This includes training relating to the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. When revised guidance is published, all members of staff receive a copy and are required to read it.

Leaders make sure that any adults working with pupils are checked to ensure their suitability to do so. The school's single central record of these checks meets requirements. Any allegations made against adults in the school are reported immediately to the local authority and robustly followed up to make sure that pupils remain safe.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- Under your leadership the school has successfully embraced a culture which nurtures ambition. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and receive the social and emotional support they need in order to learn and develop successfully. There is an underlying sense of fairness and equality of opportunity in the school's work.
- Leaders have effectively tackled underperformance, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. They now have secure information about how well pupils in these classes are doing and a clear understanding of what they need to do next in order to improve provision further.
- Historically, outcomes for pupils in the early years have been weak. They are now improving year on year. In 2015 the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development was just below average. As a result of good teaching and robust assessment systems pupils currently in the early years are making good progress from their low starting points.

- In 2015 outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 were below average. Nevertheless, this represented good progress. Only a quarter of these pupils had reached a good level of development when they left Reception, yet two thirds of them reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils currently in key stage 1 are making good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. For example, work in their books shows that over time their writing improves in terms of content, presentation and complexity.
- In 2015 pupils at the end of key stage 2 made good progress from low starting points to reach broadly average levels of attainment. Leaders took effective action to identify where their gaps in learning were and to address them.
- Across the school, current pupils are making good progress and are catching up with their peers in other schools nationally. For example, leaders identified that pupils' language skills were weak in relation to other areas of development. They decided to emphasise the development of speaking and listening skills throughout the curriculum. As a result, pupils are catching up and the gaps are narrowing. There are no significant gaps between the achievement of boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils or those who speak English as an additional language within the school. The most able pupils, however, are not consistently provided with work that challenges them to achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils receive information about what they are expected to achieve in each lesson. This school policy is applied consistently throughout the school. Pupils understand how this system works, and how teachers provide them with feedback on their work. Sometimes, however, they receive inaccurate feedback which misleads pupils. For example, they may be told that they have used punctuation successfully in a piece of writing, when they have actually made several errors.
- Almost all of the teaching staff are either new to teaching, or new to their leadership roles. Senior leaders and governors have commissioned effective support from the local authority and other schools to make sure that standards continue to rise. Middle leaders have visited nearby outstanding schools and improved provision at William Davis as a result. They are still developing their leadership skills in relation to their specific roles and responsibilities.
- Pupils are inquisitive, polite and respectful. They get on well together and there are few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Sometimes in lessons, however, pupils' attitudes are less positive. They do not respond quickly to teachers' requests and teachers' expectations are not high enough. For example, when teachers ask the class to be quiet and listen to instructions, occasionally groups of pupils continue their conversation. At other times, pupils whose attention wanders are not brought back to task quickly enough.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching, learning and assessment improves further through
 - making sure that the most able pupils are challenged to extend their learning more often
 - improving the accuracy of feedback provided to pupils on their work
 - embedding the skills of new leaders as they take on further responsibility
- teachers have consistently high expectations regarding pupils' attitudes to learning, and that pupils respond to these.

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

Gaynor Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I made visits to lessons in order to observe teaching and learning, looked in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their work. These visits were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. I scrutinised a sample of books from pupils in the early years and key stage 1. Meetings were held with senior leaders, the leader responsible for early years and key stage 1, a group of six governors and a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding, governance, the school's development plan and records relating to behaviour and attendance.