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Miss Matthews
Headteacher
Goffs Oak Primary & Nursery School
Millcrest Road
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Dear Miss Matthews

Short inspection of Goffs Oak Primary & Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 21 February 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since your appointment in September 2016, you have quickly brought stability to the school and have correctly identified the key areas for improvement. You agreed that, although the attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 2 is consistently above average, your main priority is to continue to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils to accelerate progress so that more reach higher standards of attainment.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy coming to school because they like their teachers, feel cared for and are given opportunities to participate in a range of clubs and activities. Pupils described their school as a place where 'learning is fun', and say they learn a lot because teachers challenge them and help them to achieve. The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is exemplary.

You, your staff and governors set high expectations for pupils. You have a new leadership team that shares your vision for raising standards. The chair of the governing body has reviewed the work of the governing body. He has ensured that governors' skills are used appropriately to maximise the impact of their work. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and although they carry out their statutory duties effectively, they have not ensured that the school's website contains the correct information on the school's use of the pupil premium funding or that the information about each governor is complete.

One of your first priorities, when appointed, was to look at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. You now have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The school's training programme now includes teaching assistants training alongside teachers. You have noticed that, as a result, teachers and teaching assistants now have a more effective working relationship and the quality of support for pupils has improved. Staff are appreciative of these changes and commented on the school being fully inclusive since your appointment.

You have also taken steps to improve the punctuality of pupils. Your 'every minute counts' campaign has successfully reduced the number of pupils who are late for school in the morning.

You have also improved the method used to monitor pupils' progress. Ensuring that the computerised system is fully functional has enabled staff to accurately track the progress of individual pupils and quickly identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress. Termly meetings about pupils' progress identify gaps in pupils' knowledge or skills. The school's accurate monitoring allows staff to plan appropriate support. It is too early to fully judge the impact on pupils' progress but early indications suggest that support is enabling pupils to quickly catch up with their learning.

The school provides pupils with an interesting and broad curriculum that caters well for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and prepares them for life in modern Britain. Pupils have the opportunity to perform in drama productions, take part in sports competitions and debate current affairs. The pupils told me that this was 'a great school because not only does it help us learn, it prepares us for life. We learn skills we'll need later in life, for example, to persevere when work is hard, to understand others.'

Parents and staff have confidence in the leadership of the school and the overwhelming majority of parents who expressed an opinion would recommend the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils spoken to all said that they feel safe in school. Pupils told me that the school is safe because the grounds are secure and teachers look after them. Pupils say that adults in the school listen to them and help them with any problems they may have in school and out of school, because they care about them. Pupils unanimously agree that bullying is extremely rare and pupils in the school are respectful towards one another. Pupils acknowledge that school rules are there to keep them safe. The curriculum teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations including when using the internet and modern technology. Staff and parents agree that pupils are safe and that any bullying is dealt with appropriately.

The school ensures that appropriate checks are carried out on all members of staff and volunteers who work within the school. The identification of all visitors to the school is carefully checked before they are allowed access to the classroom areas. All staff are trained regularly so they are up to date with the latest safeguarding regulations, including radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. Staff know the pupils well so they quickly identify pupils who potentially need to be safeguarded, and understand how to report their concerns. As the lead professional for safeguarding, you know when to access the local authority's early help service. All records of referrals and actions taken are carefully documented. Governors carry out their safeguarding duties effectively and they are also appropriately trained in safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- To establish whether the school remains good, my first line of enquiry was to look at whether teachers are setting challenging work that is matched to pupils' needs and abilities. This was an area for improvement from the previous inspection which you feel has improved.
- From visiting lessons, talking to pupils and looking at the work in pupils' books, I found that most of the activities teachers set are closely matched to the ability of the pupils. However, we agreed that at times some pupils, particularly the most able, are not sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are given. I also noticed that teachers are consistently applying the school's assessment policy and provide pupils with feedback that helps them to improve their work.
- My next line of enquiry was to look at progress of pupils in subjects other than English and mathematics. You agreed that this would be appropriate as the school has undertaken a lot of work on the curriculum to make it interesting and relevant to the pupils.
- Work in pupils' books and visits to lessons indicated that most pupils are making good progress in a range of curriculum subjects. Pupils are taught the necessary knowledge and subject skills which teachers develop as pupils move through the school. We saw some good examples of pupils in key stage 2 applying their previous learning to scientific investigations. Pupils also have the opportunity to use their writing and mathematics skills in subjects such as history and geography.
- My third line of enquiry was to look at the progress of the most able pupils. I chose this because the proportion of most-able pupils making better than expected progress and reaching the higher standards of attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been below average. You agreed that this was an area for improvement for the school.

- We found that in writing the most able pupils have made good progress this academic year. They write at length and use an interesting and varied range of vocabulary and grammar techniques appropriately. They take pride in their work and write legibly. We agreed that progress was particularly rapid in the early years and key stage 1. Mathematics work provides a high level of challenge, especially in key stage 2, and pupils are given the opportunity to use their reasoning skills to solve practical mathematical problems.
- In other subjects, the most able pupils' work indicated that on most occasions they add more detail to their work.
- Having looked at the school's progress information for the most able pupils, we agreed that although all pupils are on target to meet the expected standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6, there is a need for teachers to set more demanding work to enable pupils to make accelerated progress to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- My fourth line of enquiry was to look at boys' progress in reading. Historically, the achievement of boys in reading has been in line with boys nationally, but below that of girls in the school. 2016 results in reading indicated that boys' progress in reading was not significantly improving, especially for the most able. You agreed that this was an area you had identified as one that the school needed to monitor.
- I met with a group of boys, and talked to them about reading as well as listening to them read. All of the boys said they enjoyed reading and had the opportunity to read daily in school. Almost all of them read regularly at home. The boys said the school provided the types of books they liked to read and they were reading interesting books in English. All pupils were confident and fluent readers. The weaker readers made very few mistakes with their reading and were able to use strategies to read unfamiliar words. The most able readers used expression well in order to bring the story to life. I am confident that the school is taking the necessary steps to improve the progress of boys in reading.
- Finally, I looked at the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and disadvantaged pupils. Historically, the attendance of these pupils has been well below average. Our discussion enabled me to establish that this was for legitimate reasons and current attendance information indicates that attendance for this group of pupils is improving. Attendance overall matches the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teaching accelerates the progress of all pupils, especially the most able, by ensuring that they are sufficiently challenged across the full range of subjects
- the school's website has all the required information that all parents need about the pupil premium funding and information about the governing body.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Pardy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the deputy headteacher and two members of the governing body. I spoke with a representative of the local authority over the phone. We conducted a tour of the school together and visited all classes to see pupils and staff at work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons, and met with a group of pupils from Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. I also spoke to a number of pupils and staff informally at breaktime. Together we looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects. I listened to a group of boys read. I also looked at a number of documents, including information about pupils' progress, your school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and information posted on the school's website. I considered the views of 76 parents who replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, which included two free text responses, and the responses to the school's recent parent survey. I also took account of the views of the seven staff who completed the staff questionnaire.