

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Miss Lynne Gavin
Headteacher
Pakeman Primary School
Hornsey Road
London
N7 6DU

Dear Miss Gavin

Short inspection of Pakeman Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 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 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 are very ambitious and single minded in the pursuit of excellence for all. Your high expectations are shared by leaders at all levels, the governing body and staff. Your strong leadership and commitment to equality of opportunity have secured a highly motivated team. Innovative approaches such as the 'no limits project' also secure significant additional funding. These provide enrichment activities to promote pupils' academic achievement and well-being, removing any potential barriers to their learning. You are a highly respected leader, in school and within the wider community. You and your team work closely with other schools locally and nationally. You have fostered a strong spirit of collaboration with other schools, where expertise and professional development are used effectively to build on good and better practice. As a result, your teachers are supported well through an individualised coaching and mentoring programme.

The last inspection identified a need for further improvements in reading and writing. The provisional test results for 2016 confirm that writing is a notable strength in key stage 2, where all key groups of learners, irrespective of their starting points, made outstanding progress. The appointment of team leaders who have responsibility for teaching and learning in their specific year groups has bolstered the capacity to make good gains in the school's performance. For example, outcomes at the end of the early years foundation stage have risen. In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was close to the national figure. This represents a substantial improvement when compared with

previous years. Equally, a higher proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieved the expected standard in the phonics check than in the past.

A rising trend is also evident at the end of key stage 1, eliminating persistently below-average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Once more, writing is emerging as the stronger subject. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done to make sure that more pupils achieve the expected levels in reading, mathematics and science in this key stage. In particular, the achievement of disadvantaged and low-attaining pupils must continue to improve.

At the end of key stage 2, fewer pupils achieved the higher levels in reading and mathematics than in the past. This was particularly the case for those pupils with prior middle-ability attainment and the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. You carefully check any potential differences between groups, including disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally. There is no direct comparison for this group's performance compared to all pupils nationally in key stage 1, yet this is where the biggest differences in performance between the two groups are. Leaders do not set specific targets to make sure that differences are reduced. As a result, governors are not able to make sure that your work to diminish these differences is having sufficient impact.

Safeguarding is effective.

You told me that safeguarding is at the heart of everything you and your staff do. This inspection confirms that everyone gives the highest priority to safeguarding. Training is regular and up to date with all the latest statutory requirements. You and other key leaders go that extra mile to make sure that pupils are kept exceptionally safe and secure. Strong partnerships with external agencies and parents secure a culture of a collective responsibility, vigilance and trust. The designated safeguarding lead, supported well by you, makes sure that any concerns or potential risks to pupils are meticulously recorded and followed up with the utmost rigour by the appropriate agencies. Governors make sure that they fulfil their statutory duties, including safeguarding. They review policies and procedures regularly and ensure that all the required checks for recruitment are undertaken and recorded on the single central record. They visit the school regularly and are well known to parents. As a result, parents feel confident to share any concerns they may have with them, providing them with an additional communication channel. Your collective work enables you to help prevent any potential harm posed to pupils, including the dangers of radicalisation, domestic violence and female genital mutilation.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and manage any potential risks through activities, assemblies and discussions, such as with visitors from ChildLine. Pupils demonstrate very mature attitudes and take their responsibilities to keep themselves and their friends safe very seriously. They are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education and for life in modern Britain because they are respectful, thoughtful and tolerant. The school has been effective in improving attendance. Successful strategies include the work of the

educational welfare officer, rewards for good attendance and an individualised approach to helping parents who have specific difficulties which sometimes prevent them from sending their child to school regularly. As a result, attendance has risen and is close to the national figure.

Inspection findings

- Governors play a key role in the strategic direction of the school. They support and challenge you and other leaders extremely well. They are shrewd and have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, governors are able to make key decisions to improve the school, including the two-year-old provision for the most disadvantaged pupils. Governors support you well, such as in securing significant additional funding to build the new science laboratory and ensuring that pupils get to visit places like the seaside which they would not do ordinarily. They are also 'hands on' and part of the team which boosts pupils' progress. Several governors act as reading volunteers or run the times table club.
- Progress in writing in key stage 2 is rapid for all key groups of learners, irrespective of their prior attainment. However, achievement in reading in both key stages lags behind. This is particularly so for disadvantaged pupils and those who need to catch up in their learning in key stage 1. In key stage 2, the most able disadvantaged pupils' reading also lags behind.
- Inspection evidence confirms some excellent teaching in key stage 2. These teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are going to learn, what skills they need to develop and use to succeed and provide clear guidance on their next steps in their learning.
- However, effective practice is not consistent in all year groups, particularly in key stage 1. For example, some younger pupils were unable to read the learning outcomes or understand them. A scrutiny of pupils' work revealed that, occasionally, teachers did not pitch activities at the right level of difficulty. In these instances, learning did not build effectively on what pupils already knew or could do. There is a lack of precise guidance to pupils on what they have done well and what they need to work on next in order to move their learning on at a faster pace.
- In 2016, pupils with prior low ability made outstanding progress in reading as a result of the successful extra help in key stage 2.
- Work scrutinised in pupils' books shows overall good progress in key stage 1 in writing and mathematics. You recognise that interventions are not as sharply focused as in key stage 2 and you have implemented early assessments to target those pupils who need additional support quickly.
- You explained how you have re-evaluated the teaching of reading, including phonics. Pupils are taught in smaller groups, enabling staff to pitch activities at the right level of difficulty. New initiatives led by the new phonics leader include,

resources to ensure that pupils deepen their understanding and develop greater fluency in their reading.

- You now focus more on helping parents to support their child at home through workshops and one-to-one support for those parents who do not speak fluent English. Pupils have also made videos demonstrating the teaching of phonics for parents, who can access this on the school's website. Pupils who did not achieve the expected phonics level in Year 1 and Year 2 are carefully monitored and provided with intensive support to make sure that they catch up.
- You have focused on making sure that pupils are developing a wider vocabulary through drama, a school radio and debating clubs. As a consequence, most pupils achieved the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 in 2016.
- The use of high-quality texts inspires pupils to read and write for meaning in relevant and exciting contexts. Guided reading sessions are designed to meet the needs, abilities and interests of pupils well. You have invested wisely in high-quality reading books, both in class and in the new library. The investment has raised the importance and enjoyment of reading. Reading records confirm that all pupils read regularly and those that need support are able to read to volunteers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils read aloud to me confidently and fluently, including boys. They were quite emphatic that they love reading, and spoke enthusiastically about their favourite authors. The impact of these strategies to raise achievement in reading is beginning to bear fruit.
- In 2016, pupils who needed to catch up in their learning made rapid progress in key stage 2 in mathematics. Strategies to boost the progress of identified groups are already yielding success. In particular, additional booster classes for the most able pupils, a Saturday school club and problem-solving days have been particularly helpful. Pupils are taught how to master mathematical concepts, and there is now a better focus on teaching mathematical vocabulary and problem-solving.
- Work in books, however, confirms that there are some pupils who, when they have mastered a concept, are not moved on quickly or deepening their understanding. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, have additional challenges which are designed to stretch their thinking. However, some of these activities do not challenge them effectively because they are too easy. Pupils confirmed that they would like harder work much sooner in lessons. They also confirmed that they appreciate the challenging activities they have on Fridays.
- Your incisive analysis and quest for excellence means that you do not leave any stone unturned. You never cut corners and it is clear that the new science laboratory, with the specialist science teacher, inspires pupils to work scientifically. However, it is too soon to see a sustained impact on improving outcomes in this subject.

- Leaders know that there are differences in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. However, plans for improvement do not identify measurable targets to make sure that these differences are diminished, especially in key stage 1 where they are the most significant. As a result, governors are not able to hold senior staff and other leaders fully to account.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- specific targets are set to reduce the differences between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils nationally in key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, so that their attainment at least matches the national figures
- through effective guidance, pupils understand what they are to learn, what they need to do to achieve well and what they need to work on next
- activities always build on what pupils know and can do in order to move learning on more rapidly
- pupils who have grasped a mathematical concept move on to more challenging work quickly so they can master and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- how well reading is taught, particularly for boys, middle- and high-ability pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
- whether the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged to work in greater depth in mathematics, including the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2
- how well the needs of all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils who need to catch up, are being met in key stage 1
- how well science is taught effectively in key stage 1.

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

- visits to most classes in the school, jointly with leaders
- a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils
- meetings held with senior and middle leaders, governors, including the chair, and the local authority representative
- a scrutiny of 50 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View
- listening to pupils reading, including the most able and the less able pupils
- discussions with pupils about the school and how safe they feel
- a scrutiny of documentation, including school development plans, evaluations, safeguarding information, pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings.