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Jane Betsworth
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Dear Miss Betsworth

Short inspection of Millfields Community School

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 2017 with Sheila Cohring, 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.

You and your leadership team work closely with middle leaders to provide a rich educational experience for pupils. Your team shares a clear vision for the school that comes alive in the vibrant displays in corridors, classrooms and shared areas. Pupils are immersed in their learning and enjoy regular themed weeks and special events such as 'dress-up' days. During Mathematics Week, pupils enjoyed making a mathematics game at home and the school organised a range of workshops for parents. A Year 6 pupil told us, 'This school is good at everything!'

Millfields is a welcoming school that serves a diverse community. Your staff, parents and pupils told us that they are proud of their school and love being there. In their feedback, parents typically spoke of a positive, friendly, welcoming school with an inclusive ethos. Pupils explained that the school 'is a democracy', where everyone is included and given the opportunity to succeed. They take responsibility for improving their school by participating in groups such as the 'peace corps', peer mediators and eco-champions.

The staff team flourishes at Millfields thanks to your commitment to their professional development and well-being. You effectively train new teachers, support teachers new to their roles and 'grow' your own leaders. Your retention of teachers and leaders allows the school to continually build on its successes. Leaders are generous with the support they offer to their teams and to developing teachers and leaders in other local schools. Your governors are also highly committed and

They speak passionately about the part they play in the life of the school. They engage actively in their roles and are regular visitors to the school.

At the previous inspection, weaknesses were identified in aspects of mathematics teaching and pupils' outcomes in mathematics. While there have been some improvements, you recognise that more work needs to be done. The school is also working to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils, some of whom continue to underachieve. We agreed to pursue both of these areas of the school's work as key lines of enquiry for this inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding practice is managed rigorously at the school. As designated safeguarding lead, you ensure that arrangements for keeping children safe are fit for purpose and that records are well organised, detailed and clear. Safeguarding training for staff is comprehensive and up to date. You and the inclusion leader have a clear understanding of the local risks to your pupils and their families. The inclusion leader talked me through case studies that showed how the school follows up concerns thoroughly. This can involve engaging support from a range of specialists, including social care where appropriate. You work effectively with the school's pastoral team and community partners, such as the local police, to promote the safety and welfare of pupils.

Pupils told us that they feel safe at school and that if they have a concern they ask an adult to help. They talked about e-safety and anti-bullying lessons, assemblies and special events when they learn how to stay safe. In their view, there is very little bullying at the school, and any incidents in the playground are dealt with by their teachers. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View also reported that the school deals effectively with bullying and that their child is happy at school.

Inspection findings

- We agreed that the inspection would focus on three particular areas of the school's work: pupils' achievement in mathematics; the effectiveness of provision for disadvantaged pupils; and the gap between boys' and girls' achievement.
- Over time, pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics have been broadly average and less positive than in reading and writing. In response to this, you changed your mathematics teaching strategy to one with a greater focus on conceptual understanding and problem solving. As a result, in 2017, there was an improvement in pupils' attainment and progress in key stage 2 mathematics.
- During the inspection, we observed teachers using the new approach in lessons. They explained mathematics concepts clearly and demonstrated accurate subject knowledge. Pupils in all classes were engaged in their mathematics lessons, and their books showed that they had made good progress since September.
- We met with the school's mathematics team members and they showed how the strategies they introduced last year are having a positive impact on pupils' progress in mathematics across the school. They are committed to continuing this work in order to improve pupils' progress further.

- In 2017, at the end of key stages 1 and 2, there was a gap between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and those of their peers. School leaders and governors have taken action based on careful analysis of the progress of disadvantaged pupils across the school. They have a well-thought-out strategy for spending the pupil premium grant. Governors are monitoring its impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils regularly in meetings and school visits.
- Leaders work closely alongside teachers to put in place extra support for disadvantaged pupils. We observed targeted interventions during the inspection and looked at how well disadvantaged pupils are learning in lessons. In many cases, the planned support has been effective. In books, we saw that most pupils have made good progress since September. However, there are some disadvantaged pupils whose needs are complex; leaders accurately identified that there is more to be done to raise the attainment of these pupils.
- Leaders are aware that past underachievement of disadvantaged pupils was associated with high absence rates. The school has worked closely with families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. As a result, this year, attendance of this group has improved and is currently close to the national average for all pupils.
- Leaders identified that in 2017 boys achieved less well than girls by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. We sought to confirm the school's analysis of the progress of current pupils, which indicates that boys' underachievement was specific to those year groups and not part of a recurring pattern.
- Leaders took action to ensure that boys were finding learning interesting, particularly in writing. We saw how writing areas in the Reception Year were reorganised in response to ideas suggested by the boys. When visiting lessons and looking in books, we observed that most boys are fully engaged in their learning and are consequently making good progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics at key stage 2 so that all pupils make good or better progress
- regularly check and modify plans to support disadvantaged pupils to ensure that they are having an impact on the achievement of these pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Jo Franklin
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection team carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- We listened to parents' feedback about the school and analysed the 66 responses to the online questionnaire for parents.
- We held discussions with you and senior and middle leaders.
- We undertook joint visits with leaders to lessons in all year groups.
- We reviewed work in pupils' books.
- We met with your school improvement partner and a group of governors.
- We met with a group of pupils and asked them for their views of the school.
- We heard a group of pupils read and discussed reading with them.
- We talked to pupils playing outside at playtime.
- We reviewed a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation and the school development plan.