

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Maria Dactylides  
Headteacher  
Lea Valley Primary School  
Somerford Grove  
London  
N17 0PT

Dear Mrs Dactylides

### **Short inspection of Lea Valley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 July 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

You and your leadership team have developed a very inclusive school, where pupils of all backgrounds know that they can thrive. They develop into confident young people and achieve academic success. You have a strong sense of moral purpose and your leadership style makes it clear that all adults and pupils have a part to play in the continuing development of the school. You nurture new leaders effectively and staff at all levels feel valued and supported. Pupils, staff and parents recognise the quality of education that your school provides and were hugely complimentary about the school through the inspection questionnaires.

The school has continued to make improvements since the last inspection and the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is consistently strong across the school. Teachers plan a range of different activities that meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils enjoy learning, make progress and are proud of their work.

Leaders recognised that Year 6 pupils' performance dipped in 2017, with weaker than expected results in reading and boys making slower progress than other groups. You have taken prompt action to tackle these issues. You recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that careful checks are kept on the progress of all groups of pupils.

Parents hold the school in high regard. At the start of the inspection, all those who had responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agreed that they would recommend the school to others, and that the school was well led and managed. Parents also submitted very positive responses through the website's free-text facility. One parent summed up the views of others by writing, 'My child is now in Year 6 and has thoroughly enjoyed his time at primary school. I feel this is a very special school where children are nurtured to reach their full potential and are treated with respect, and as individuals.'

Governors are committed, ambitious and determined to see the school do even better. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas to improve. They provide a good blend of challenge and support and are not afraid to ask difficult questions of leaders. Governors are keen to improve and develop their own skills. They have used a skills audit effectively to identify the areas of training they need in the future. For example, they know they need to publish on the school's website a review of the impact of the pupil premium funding on disadvantaged pupils that is more closely linked to the greatest needs of this group.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is of paramount importance to all staff and governors and you ensure that they are kept up to date with all the required training. You and your staff know your pupils and their families very well and are quick to spot any problems, including unusual patterns of behaviour or attendance. Any concerns are swiftly investigated and referred to specialist agencies when required. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a good quality.

Pupils report that they feel very safe and explain that they can approach any adult in the school if they have a worry or concern. All parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire reported that their children felt safe at school and were well looked after and nurtured. As one parent explained, the school provides their children 'with a safe environment in which to learn'.

### **Inspection findings**

- During this visit, we focused on how well leaders and teachers are ensuring that:
  - pupils make better progress in reading at key stages 1 and 2
  - key stage 1 pupils improve their skills in phonics
  - children in the early years, especially the boys, achieve well.
- Leaders have put in place a number of measures to ensure that current pupils make better progress in reading. Teachers have developed more effective strategies to improve pupils' reading skills. Pupils read widely, both in school and at home, and develop a real love of reading.

- Leaders identified that pupils' understanding of what they were reading prevented a greater proportion of them from reaching the expected standard in the 2017 statutory test. As a result, you have ensured that teachers provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their comprehension skills and broaden their vocabulary. During the inspection, pupils explained to me the different ways they look out for new vocabulary. Pupils struggling with their reading are closely monitored and are also supported by extra adults. You acknowledge that you need to continue to build on and refine the teaching of reading to maximise pupils' reading skills and depth of understanding. You agreed that there are missed opportunities where pupils are not being set work at the right level, particularly for the most able.
- Standards in phonics are not at the level they should be. The proportions of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 have declined over the last three years. Leaders have reviewed recent outcomes and have changed the way in which they teach phonics. Closer checks on how well pupils are doing are helping to identify groups who need extra support. Teaching assistants have been trained to target particular groups, especially those pupils who are falling behind, to help them catch up. There is still work to be done here to ensure that the rates of progress for different groups of pupils improve and a higher proportion meet or exceed the national expectation.
- Teaching in early years has seen notable improvements since the previous inspection. Consequently, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception Year has risen and is now at the national average. Boys are now performing in line with their peers due to the determined action of leaders to provide interesting activities to engage them. During the inspection, there were a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their writing skills, both inside and outside the classroom, and displays were of a high quality.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- attainment in all year groups continues to improve, particularly for the most-able pupils, especially in reading
- teaching in phonics enables pupils to reach standards that are at or above national expectations.

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

Yours sincerely

Michelle Thomas  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, senior leaders, a group of pupils and two governors, and I spoke to a representative from the local authority by telephone. I also spoke to parents before school. I jointly observed teaching with you in all classes and I discussed the learning in pupils' books with you and other senior leaders. I also listened to pupils read.

I checked the school's website and examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, assessment information and the school development plan and safeguarding records. I took account of 113 responses from parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire and I also considered 40 responses from staff and 43 responses from pupils.