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23 January 2018

Ms Parmjeet Kaur Sehmi
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Sehmi

Short inspection of Khalsa Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 January 2018, 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.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Leaders have successfully improved the weaker aspects of teaching identified in the previous report. Teachers now help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve and give them the time to respond to the advice and guidance provided for them. Standards in mathematics remain high. Pupils' attendance remains good. As a result of good assessment, the teaching of phonics has improved. Good assessment procedures have also helped teachers to increase the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception classes.

The pupils with whom I spoke talked warmly about the school and of the support they receive. They were very positive about the way in which their own religious knowledge and understanding is taught alongside fundamental British values. They appreciated the range of the curriculum and were very positive about the increasing opportunities provided for them to experience music and the arts. During the inspection, pupils behaved very well, showed very positive attitudes and a willingness to learn.

The leadership of the school has been through some turbulence over the last two years, which has unsettled some parents. There continue to be changes in governance and a need for further recruitment. The leadership team is still relatively new, but you now have the support and additional capacity you need as a leader to continue to improve the school. Already, systems in the school are becoming stronger and you are better supported in leading improvements to teaching and learning. As yet, however, leaders'

work in following their actions through and monitoring their impact is not as rigorous as it needs to be. As a consequence, inconsistencies remain and leaders do not have an accurate view of why the progress and achievement of some pupils vary between classes and across year groups. While pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics is good, more needs to be done to improve their reading, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The protection and safety of children is the first and foremost priority for the school. A strong culture of safeguarding exists. Teachers are well trained and any safeguarding concern is reported swiftly and dealt with rigorously.

The pupils I spoke with knew how to keep themselves safe, both when working online and when they are away from school. On the playground, pupils talked to me about how they watch out for each other at school and trust their teachers to deal with any unkindness they experience from others. They value the 'worry boxes' set up by teachers in their classrooms and are confident that if they have concerns, they will be dealt with well. Although some parents have a perception that bullying can happen in school, the pupils I spoke with did not consider bullying to be something they have seen or experienced. This is confirmed in the school's records.

The school site is large, but it is well supervised at all times. Governors make all appropriate checks when recruiting new staff and keep a close eye on the school's systems for safeguarding to make sure that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- My first focus for the inspection was to understand how effective leaders have been in improving key stage 2 pupils' attainment and progress in reading. Although pupils make good progress in mathematics and in writing, 2017 results of national assessments in Year 6 show that their progress in reading is lagging behind, so they are not attaining the high outcomes of which they are capable.
- Pupils make a good start and can apply their knowledge of phonics well to sound out unfamiliar words. However, they do not develop the skills of comprehension and inference as well as they should. This means that they have difficulty in working out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases. It also means that they are confused about what they have read, so reducing their enjoyment of reading. For example, the pupils I heard reading missed details that were important to the story, or did not spot the intended humour. Some pupils were not able to explain or summarise the meaning of the text. Although some pupils read with expression, others did not, with a few failing to take account of punctuation when reading aloud. Pupils were very positive about enjoying reading, and how to choose books with vocabulary that is neither too easy nor too hard to sound out. They expressed positive attitudes to reading and many used thesauruses and dictionaries confidently in lessons.

- Leaders have worked to improve consistency in the teaching of reading across the key stage. The school has purchased a good range of interesting reading books for pupils, with an appropriate balance between fiction and non-fiction. External support has been used to provide training for staff to improve the teaching of reading, including comprehension strategies and techniques. However, these have not been implemented consistently across classes. As leaders' monitoring has not picked up on this and provided further support, pupils' progress in reading remains erratic. Although some teachers organise the teaching of reading very effectively, the lack of consistency across classes weakens its impact overall in raising achievement.
- Another focus for the inspection was to evaluate how effectively governors are fulfilling their responsibilities. Following concerns regarding the role of governance in 2016, significant changes were introduced with the support of the local authority. These included the appointment of an interim chair of governors, and an action plan in 2017 to improve the role of governors.
- Good progress has been made in strengthening the relationship between governors and the school leadership team. The identified weaknesses in the governing body's monitoring of safeguarding procedures, and in ensuring the implementation of effective arrangements for staff performance management, have been addressed. These responsibilities are now fulfilled effectively. Governors have strengthened the school's senior leadership team by restructuring responsibilities and appointing additional leadership posts. They have also ensured that the school's complaints procedures are followed consistently. The greater partnership and understanding between leaders and governors are ensuring that policies and decisions made for the benefit of pupils' welfare are understood, and supported.
- Governors still have more to do in supporting and challenging leaders to raise standards and maximise the use of resources. As yet, there has only been limited discussion of the school's performance, assessment results and the use of additional funds to support disadvantaged pupils. There are currently several vacancies on the governing body. The absence of a full and permanent team of governors is reducing the capacity of the governing body to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.
- Finally, we agreed to focus on how leaders are ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make good progress and close the achievement gap with other pupils. Although disadvantaged pupils achieve well in writing and mathematics, in reading the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2017 were below those of other pupils in school and nationally. This pattern is reflected in the performance of current pupils in each year.
- Leaders have used the information from the newly introduced assessment system to identify those disadvantaged pupils who are not making the progress that they should. Regular discussions take place with class teachers to agree plans that will help accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress. Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support in lessons and through booster classes, including extra help with phonics where necessary.
- As yet, however, the school is unable to demonstrate the impact of these initiatives. Leaders have not monitored the quality of intervention programmes closely enough, or evaluated how well the agreed plans are implemented in classrooms. Assessment information still highlights inconsistency in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils

through different year groups. Plans are in place to strengthen the use of this information to improve actions and to tackle weaknesses, but the impact of these remains unproven.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives and actions they have introduced are rigorous and are followed through
- strategies and techniques for the teaching of reading through key stage 2 are consistently and rigorously implemented to ensure accelerated progress for all pupils
- additional governors are recruited to enable the governing body to function effectively
- the governing body fulfils its role in supporting and challenging leaders to improve the school's performance, and to make sure that additional funds allocated to support disadvantaged pupils are used well.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Wagstaff
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I had discussions with you and senior leaders about actions taken to improve the school. I spoke with the interim chair of governors and a staff governor. I also spoke with representatives of the local authority. I undertook 'learning walks' with you across classes in key stage 2. I met with several pupils from across the key stage to hear them read. I also observed and spoke with pupils on the playground. I analysed a range of school documents linked to the school's self-evaluation and improvement priorities. The 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were reviewed, as were the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire.