

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



16 January 2017

Brian Fox
Headteacher
Roding Primary School
Hewett Road
Dagenham
Essex
RM8 2XS

Dear Mr Fox

Short inspection of Roding Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 December 2016 with Helena Mills, 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 February 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. This is despite the significant challenges thrown up by the rapid expansion of the school and the need to recruit a large number of new teachers each year over the past four or five years.

You and senior leaders have managed this expansion extremely well. You have not only provided strategic leadership but have ensured that the day-to-day management of the school has remained strong and focused on pupils' education. This has been no small feat. It is a great strength of leadership that all leaders play a central role in the school's drive for improvement. As a result, you have tackled the recommendations from the last inspection successfully. For example, the progress of different groups of pupils is checked thoroughly. This ensures that you and your staff have an accurate overview of progress across the school as well as how well individual pupils are doing.

In the early years, children get off to a strong start. The school has robust procedures to check children's skills when they start school. These are typically below expectations. However, children make strong progress and the proportion reaching the expected standard for their age at the end of the year is rising. Outcomes in 2015 were a little above average and better than the previous year. They continued to rise in 2016 and the school's assessment information indicates that current children in the early years are on track to do well by the end of the year. This is the result of effective teaching, including the way phonics is taught.

In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016, fewer pupils reached the expected standard than average. However, you, senior leaders and the governors have wisely focused on improving phonics teaching and have identified this as one of the school's priorities. This focus is having a positive impact on the teaching of phonics and pupils' achievements. Pupils make good progress with their reading skills and use their knowledge of phonics to sound out new or difficult words. The outcomes for pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 were strongest in reading but weakest in writing. In mathematics, pupils' outcomes were in line with expected levels but below average at the higher levels. Again, the school has identified improving writing and mathematics in key stage 1 as priorities and the school's information indicates that outcomes are improving. However, some inconsistencies remain, with pupils achieving well in some classes but less well in others.

Pupils' achievement in key stage 2 is a similarly mixed picture, but it is improving as a result of the school's work to raise standards. In the 2016 tests at the end of Year 6, pupils made above-average progress in writing and disadvantaged pupils, the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils did particularly well. All pupils made expected progress in reading, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able. In mathematics, progress was average but a little stronger than reading with lower-attainers doing well. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able made expected progress. The school's assessment information, as well as evidence from pupils' books, suggests that pupils' achievement is improving now that the school is more stable and receives fewer pupils mid-way through the year. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils who come and go during the year remains relatively high and they do not get the full benefit of the school's good quality of education.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and senior leaders have ensured that safeguarding remains effective. Training for staff is up to date including for issues such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders have attended training about domestic violence and children missing in education. Staff are clear about the procedures for reporting any concerns that might arise. Leaders follow up concerns promptly, ensuring that pupils are kept safe.

Pupils told inspectors that they know how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. One pupil said that she feels the school 'is the safest place in the world'. Pupils are given lots of information about safety, for example on stranger danger, road safety and how to keep safe online. Pupils feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have a concern.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders have steered the school very successfully through a long period of expansion. This has entailed huge changes from accepting many new pupils, overseeing a new school building and increasing the teaching staff to over 70. Throughout these changes, leaders have preserved a focus on pupils'

achievements and well-being. Although the school is now based in two different buildings, over half a mile apart, leaders have established a consistently positive climate across both. Despite the differences between the two buildings in relation to size, quality and the range of facilities, Roding Primary is truly one school on two sites.

- Governors have supported the school well through this challenging period and helped leaders to keep their focus on pupils' achievements. Governors have a good range of experiences that enable them to ask searching questions about the school's performance. They understand the school's performance well and are very realistic about the challenges it faces. For example, they identify recruitment, teaching quality and ensuring the same high-quality education on both sites as being important areas.
- You and senior leaders are rigorous and honest in the way you evaluate the school's performance, including the quality of teaching. Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and do not shy away from tackling difficult issues. As a result, leaders take effective action to reduce any inconsistencies in teaching quality. This is largely successful, although leaders recognise that this continues to be a priority. Nevertheless, the drive for improvement is a significant strength.
- You have rightly identified that phonics, reading and mathematics need improving and have established a range of strategies and interventions to deal with these. This includes using the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively and ensuring it has a positive impact on their achievements. Disadvantaged pupils, including those that are the most able, often do well – especially in writing.
- The procedures to measure pupils' performance accurately are effective. This ensures that teachers and leaders know the pupils well and are able to identify where to target support. This is having a positive impact on their achievements and although there are still some inconsistencies, these are starting to lessen. For example, small classes to help pupils overcome difficulties in mathematics or for additional work on phonics are helping to raise standards and progress.
- Behaviour around the school and in classrooms is strong. This is the result of clear procedures for rewarding good behaviour and taking action when pupils do not behave well. Pupils are very clear about the 'golden rules' and that the school gives them lots of opportunities to get rewards. They particularly enjoy the 'bouncy castle' event and discos. Pupils say that all types of bullying, including homophobic bullying, are rare. They note that teachers are very quick to deal with pupils who fall out with each other.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and provides good opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of learning activities including French in key stage 2. Teaching is strong and increasingly pupils are given challenging work that enables them to achieve at a greater depth. For example, in mathematics there is an emphasis on getting pupils to achieve at a greater depth and this is having a clear impact on achievement, especially for the most able. However, it is still early days for some of this work and the impact is not yet consolidated fully.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the focus on writing and mathematics in key stage 1, and reading and mathematics in key stage 2, remain priorities so that pupils make better progress in these subjects
- the teaching of phonics continues to be improved so that more pupils in Year 1 reach the expected standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

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

- Confirm the current achievement of pupils in key stage 2 across the school and subjects. In particular, focus on pupils' outcomes in reading, which are less strong than in writing and mathematics, and the progress made by girls and boys.
- Confirm the current progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged. What is the school doing to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress?
- The current attainment of pupils in key stage 1. Confirm pupils' attainment when they start school. What is the quality of phonics teaching in key stage 1 and the early years and is the decline being reversed?
- What are leaders and managers doing to ensure that teaching is consistently strong and has a positive impact on pupils' achievements?
- Do staff and governors understand the legal guidelines for keeping children safe? Are staff aware of the procedures for referring concerns? Does the designated safeguarding lead follow up concerns robustly?

The following activities were carried out during the inspection:

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, the wider leadership team and governors.

- Parents were spoken to informally before school.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils to talk about their views of the school.
- A small group of pupils were heard reading.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and information about pupils' progress, the governing body, and pupils' attendance. The school's single central record and safeguarding procedures were also checked.
- The inspectors reviewed the school's website and confirmed that it meets requirements on the publication of specified information.
- The inspectors took account of 109 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- All classes were visited to see a range of subjects being taught, including classes in the early years.