

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



13 October 2017

Mr Stephen Spooner  
Headteacher  
Princess May Primary School  
Princess May Road  
London  
N16 8DF

Dear Mr Spooner

### **Short inspection of Princess May Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 3 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 February 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 show your strong commitment to the pupils and to the families you serve by ensuring that the school continues to improve. You have effectively tackled the areas identified at the previous inspection. You and your senior leaders have rightfully directed your efforts at improving the quality of teaching and learning. The concept of 'everyone is a leader' which you established in school has enabled every member of staff to recognise their individual accountability. You hold every teacher to account, holding discussions about individual pupils' progress during termly meetings with class teachers.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified the need to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. It was also recommended that pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work and reach their targets. You have tackled these recommendations successfully, in part by targeting professional development for teachers accurately. You use a range of methods to ensure that teachers have the opportunities they need to improve their practice, drawing on expertise within the school, and collaborating with schools in your cluster. The local authority representative confirmed how closely teachers and leaders work with other schools in the borough to improve their own practice.

As a result of improvements in teaching, pupils' outcomes in all areas have been improving over the past three years. In 2016, the proportion of pupils working at the expected standard by the end of key stage 2 was above the national average in all areas. In mathematics, however, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as other pupils nationally. You are aware of this and you have taken effective action to address this and

gaps are now diminishing rapidly. You recognise, however, that further improvements are needed in the teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 to ensure that teachers plan lessons which take into account what pupils already know and can do. You also acknowledge that there is still work to do to provide pupils with appropriate levels of challenge, particularly those who need to catch up in their writing.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff and governors are well trained to help them identify risk to pupils and ensure that they know what to do. You and your staff place a high priority on ensuring that pupils are safe and their welfare is protected. Your staff understand their responsibility to report to you immediately any concerns that they have about a pupil's safety. You serve as the designated safeguarding lead in the school and you keep detailed, up-to-date records and have put good systems in place to safeguard pupils. You are not afraid to escalate your concerns if you do not believe agencies are responding with sufficient urgency. You use your strong relationship with the community to address the needs of vulnerable pupils in your care.

Pupils said they felt safe and spoke confidently about how they could help to keep themselves safe. They told me how to stay safe in school, at home, and when online. They told me that bullying is rare and that adults are very quick to deal with any bullying, should it occur. Parents are confident that their children are safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- In our initial discussion, we identified the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics as a key line of enquiry. This was because in 2016, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard was below other pupils nationally, both in key stage 1 and key stage 2. You were aware of this and you have put in a place a number of changes in the way you teach mathematics across the school.
- When looking at books and observing learning with school leaders, we found that in key stage 1, disadvantaged pupils make good progress. They regularly engage in opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills. Lessons and activities are planned systematically, enabling pupils to show the progress they are making. Teaching considers the standards they need to reach by the end of each unit of work.
- In key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' engagement in their mathematics lessons is high. They respond actively to class teachers' effective questioning. They know they have mastered a maths skill because they are able to answer number problems presented in a variety of ways. However, teachers do not always use what pupils already know and can do when planning for learning. There are instances where planned learning did not match what pupils were capable of; this slowed progress. Another line of enquiry focused on the achievement of the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, in writing. During this inspection, we found that these pupils are now receiving effective guidance from teachers when writing. Such direction from adults enables them to produce extended pieces of writing effectively. They reach expected standards and oftentimes exceed them. Teachers are skilful in planning series of lessons which are

aimed at developing pupils' vocabulary. The writing they produce uses ambitious language and complex sentences. Pupils are able to apply these skills across a variety of writing types, including poetry, stories, and information articles.

- Pupils, including the most able and the most able disadvantaged, benefit from a wide range of pre-writing activities planned for them. These include learning new words, retelling or acting out stories orally, or looking at punctuation. Teachers ensure that pupils have the skills they need to be able to write successfully. They thrive in extended writing opportunities, and show ability to produce high-quality pieces.
- We also looked at pupils who need to catch up in their writing. This was because in 2017, pupils with low prior attainment made a much slower rate of progress than other pupils nationally. In books and in lessons, we found that pupils identified as needing to catch up in their writing make variable rates of progress. They get plenty of opportunities to practise their writing skills. When they are being stretched, they produce writing of high quality. In these instances, vocabulary becomes ambitious and sophisticated. However, this is not consistent enough to ensure that they make sustained progress over time. Work in books shows that adults do not intervene promptly enough to correct grammatical and spelling mistakes. The guidance that pupils receive from their teachers does not focus on how to improve their writing and is sometimes limited to how they present their work.
- The final line of enquiry asked whether leaders are taking appropriate action to improve the attendance of pupils. School leaders have a zero-tolerance approach to absence. There is an effective system of managing pupils' absence, from actions initiated by the school to local authority interventions. Where pupils' absences reflect wider issues, including medical needs, the school works effectively with families and external agencies to ensure that barriers to attendance are addressed.
- The decision of school leaders to hold parents to account for their children's attendance has paid off. There is a unified message from the school at all levels that attendance is paramount. The system for tracking and intervening when pupils are identified to be at risk of non-attendance is helping you to lead improvements to attendance effectively. School leaders also use the rich information they hold about families to offer tailored support to improve attendance.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving expected standards in mathematics increases, by making sure teachers take into account what pupils already know and can do when planning learning
- pupils needing to catch up in their writing receive appropriate challenge in lessons to make rapid and sustained progress.

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

Edison David  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and the deputy headteachers. I also met with the school business manager and looked at recruitment files. I also considered responses to Parent View and the staff survey. I spoke to a number of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and also their views on learning and behaviour in general. I held discussions with the local authority's representative. I met with the vice-chair of the governing body, who was able to provide me with additional information. I also considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website. I looked at recruitment files, the single central record, and the analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with school leaders, I visited classes to observe learning and I looked at samples of pupils' work in writing and mathematics. I listened to reading by pupils from across the ability range.