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Mr Tom Hart
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Hart

Short inspection of Aldborough Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 February 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 Aldborough Primary 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 previous inspection. Your leadership brought much-needed stability to the school, and this has resulted in the retention of staff and improvements in standards in all areas of the school.

With your senior leadership team, you have successfully addressed the actions for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. These include improving outcomes for the most able pupils, improving teaching, and developing early years provision. You have reviewed roles and responsibilities across the school and accelerated the development of middle leaders. This has increased the school's capability to sustain improvements.

Effective communication and clear procedures mean that each member of the leadership team has a detailed understanding of their areas of responsibility and leads them successfully. As a result, across all key stages, pupils make good progress from their starting points.

The chief executive of the trust and the chair of the local governing board know the school well and share your ambition for the pupils; they have fully supported your actions for improvement. Members of the local governing board carry out frequent visits to check progress, and ask challenging questions to make sure leaders secure improvement.

Pupils are making rapid progress across all year groups. Pupils read widely and apply their reading skills across the curriculum. Pupils develop writing skills quickly and are able to use them with confidence across a range of genres. In particular, the school's catch-up programme has been very effective in improving achievement for disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing in key stage 2.

Although most of the current pupils in key stage 1 are making rapid progress in reading, writing, and mathematics and working at expected standards, a smaller proportion are working at greater depth compared to national figures. The most able pupils do not get consistently challenging work to enable them to achieve the higher standards.

Pupils at the school are polite and well mannered; they are confident and happy to engage in enrichment activities at school. All the pupils I spoke to were proud of their school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The school's policy and procedures support enhanced safeguarding of all children at the school. Pupils understand internet safety. The arrangements for recruitment are effective. All governors and staff have been trained in keeping children safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism; an internal audit makes sure that staff understand what is required of them. The school works effectively with external agencies to help keep children safe.

Inspection findings

- One of the areas I focused on was the action taken by the school to ensure that a higher proportion of children in the early years are working at greater depth. Children are now making rapid progress from their starting points; they acquire skills quickly and apply them well across all areas of learning.
- The newly appointed early years leader has wasted no time in transforming the children's learning experience. As a result, more children are on track to meet the end of year expectations. Her practice is an inspiration to others in the phase and has resulted in improved support for children, so that they are now making accelerated progress.
- Early years teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and understanding of children's learning needs. Children have clear strategies to achieve the next steps because of the effectiveness of feedback. Higher proportions of children are now working within the expectations for their age. Most-able children are not challenged sufficiently and, as a result, only a small proportion of them are working at greater depth.
- The inspection also focused on the teaching of phonics and early reading. You and your senior leaders have invested time in improving the teaching of phonics. This is now the key responsibility of the early years leader. As a result of the

school's work, pupils are now taught phonics more systematically. This enables them to tackle new and unfamiliar words in reading and to read with greater confidence. For example, a phonics intervention lesson targeted key stage 2 pupils who made progress within the session successfully to consolidate previous knowledge.

- Finally, the inspection focused on leaders' work to improve the attendance of pupils. In spite of high levels of pupil mobility, pupils' attendance shows an improving picture.
- Staff are fully aware of their role in promoting excellent attendance and act swiftly when any child is absent. Special assemblies, a class trophy and attendance trips are some of the ways the school tackles absence. As a result, attendance has improved for most pupils across the school. However, attendance remains stubbornly low for a very small minority. The level of persistent absence is declining and is now below national levels.
- You have improved the attendance of pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by working closely with their families and involving a number of external agencies. Additionally, because these pupils attend school more regularly, their achievement has improved.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school continues to increase the proportion of early years children working at or towards greater depth
- regular and sharper evaluation of actions to improve pupils' attendance continues to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence of pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Maureen Okoye
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with parents in the playground at the start of the day. I also spoke with pupils in class and around the school during the day. I met with the chief executive of the academy and the chair of the local governing board. I also met with the attendance officer, the trust safeguarding leader, the school special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader, the phonics and

reading leader and the primary director. There were no responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.

I observed pupils at work in lessons, accompanied by you and other senior leaders. I scrutinised pupils' work with the deputy headteacher, and spoke to senior leaders about pupils' progress. I met with the officer responsible for the arrangements for checking the suitability of staff for employment. I observed pupils' behaviour in class and around the school. I analysed a range of school documentation including local governing board minutes, the school development plan and self-evaluation, information about attendance, safeguarding policies, checks and procedures. Together, we discussed your self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness.