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Joel Sager
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Sager

Short inspection of Pardes House Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 June 2016, 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 March 2011.

This school continues to be good.

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

Since your appointment as headteacher, at the start of the summer term of 2012, you have seized the opportunity to review the school's curriculum, ensuring that it interests pupils and prepares them exceptionally well for future learning and life in modern Britain.

You have established a culture where fellow leaders feel empowered to make changes and where all pupils are expected to achieve their very best pastorally and academically. You and your colleagues have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are taking swift action to bring about improvements when they are needed. Governors share your ambitions for an inspiring, broad and balanced curriculum, which sits alongside the Kodesh curriculum, and values all individuals.

Governors, staff and parents contribute to the welcoming and positive culture of the school. You have set clear expectations for behaviour for adults and pupils. Pupils are well mannered, polite and courteous to visitors. They willingly discuss and share how much they enjoy their learning at Pardes House. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, indicated that their children are happy at the school and feel safe. These views were reflected in the conversations I had with parents and pupils on site. At the previous inspection, inspectors commented favourably on the good behaviour in lessons and around the school, and parents'

positive views of the school. These continue to be areas of strength, as is pupils' good attendance which remains above the national average.

Since the last inspection, the school has benefited from a recent building and expansion programme. This is leading to increases in both staffing and pupil numbers. You are aware of the need to build capacity for the future, providing opportunities for many class teachers to take on middle leadership roles. Pupils appreciate the well-presented site and new school roof. Your boardroom and corridors provide a showcase for pupils' learning and high-quality art work.

Leaders, supported by governors, have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Middle leaders use the school's own framework, for evaluating the effectiveness of subject leaders. This provides clear guidance in supporting them to systematically monitor and evaluate progress in their subjects and plan future priorities. The inclusion leader is knowledgeable and is focused on ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have appropriate activities and resources to build on their learning. As a result, by the time they leave the school, many are making as good or better progress when compared to their peers in the school.

Following the last inspection, improvements in the use of assessment information are ensuring that teaching has remained good and pupils have continued to make good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of Reception has been above the national average for the last two years. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who meet the expected standard in the phonics (the link between sounds and letters) check has remained above the national average for the fourth year running. Standards at the end of key stage 1 have been consistently in line with, or above, the national averages in reading and mathematics for the last two years. Also, for the last two years, standards in writing, reading and mathematics continue to be consistently in line with, or above, the national averages by the end of key stage 2. While pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, achievement in writing has lagged behind by the end of key stage 1. This is because some of the basic writing skills are not addressed early enough. You have rightly identified that further work on improving the teaching of writing is a key priority.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and detailed records are maintained. However, policies have not always been updated to take account of the latest guidance and reflect the good practice seen at the school. Training in safer recruitment practices have been completed and the required staff employment checks carried out. Leaders have made sure that training is repeated frequently so that staff are well informed and know the school's systems and procedures. Staff are up to date with current safeguarding guidance.

Inspection findings

- You and the leadership team check the quality of the school's work and pupils' progress regularly. Leaders use this information, including detailed checks of learning in pupils' books, to identify where the school needs to do better. Subject leaders make a significant contribution to improvements identified. They play a full and vital role in monitoring the quality of teaching in their respective subjects. Subject leaders have contributed well to the design and implementation of the new curriculum and are ensuring that exciting, relevant writing opportunities take place across the whole curriculum.
- You and your team have successfully created an environment where boys write with enthusiasm and purpose through the many 'special learning weeks'. Pupils are positive about the experiences on offer. For example they spoke excitedly about the whole school writing event, 'The mystery of the five books', describing the arrival of the local police, and preparing news reports and videos. As a result of these focused, themed weeks, many quality pieces of writing are being produced. These are celebrated on your new 'walls of wonderful writing', inspiring pupils further. Improvements can be seen in the use of more adventurous vocabulary. However, you agree that attention now needs to focus on ensuring that writing skills, including handwriting and spelling, are taught well and sequentially throughout the school.
- British values are threaded throughout the school's new curriculum and again are highlighted through your 'special learning weeks', like the recent celebrations for the Queen's 90th birthday. Pupils have learned about democracy, tolerance and the rule of the law through learning about the history and meaning of the Magna Carta as a central tenet of British democracy. Your school community are rightly proud of their Pardes House Magna Carta, which is displayed prominently in the main school entrance.
- You and your governors are committed to making sure that your pupils know how to keep themselves safe and free from harm. This includes working with parents through evening workshops, and through delivering e-safety sessions to pupils, so that they are aware of how to avoid risks online. Even though the direct use of the internet is not promoted within your orthodox Jewish faith, leaders and governors are clear about the need to ensure that those in their care are aware of potential dangers. Also, recent additional spending on technology has improved the provision for information and communication technology. As a result, pupils are practising and developing their technology skills more frequently in lessons.
- Leaders and governors have made sure that there is a strong, caring ethos at the school. You have worked hard to harness the support of parents, from reviewing books for the school library to welcoming and helping pupils from their cars as they are dropped off. As a result, from the start of their school day, pupils arrive to a calm and settled school. They conduct themselves well and wear their uniform with pride.
- Governors and leaders have a realistic and accurate view of the school. Strategic planning is in place and the priorities are clear. However, school improvement planning, including at subject leadership level, lacks sufficient

focus on identifying the impact that actions will have for pupils' outcomes. You accept that clearly identifying the difference that you expect to see, particularly in rates of pupils' progress and outcomes in writing, is a priority. This will enable you and your governors to monitor progress more accurately and adjust plans swiftly according to pupils' needs and the effectiveness of actions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school improvement planning sets out clear and measurable criteria so that leaders and governors can check the impact of actions they are taking to tackle the slower progress of small groups of pupils, particularly in writing
- basic writing skills, including handwriting and spelling, are taught well and sequentially, and teachers provide strategies which enable pupils to spell more accurately in order to accelerate their 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 Barnet. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Thwaites
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the office administrator and senior teachers who lead on the school's literacy, early years, inclusion and assessment provision. I also met with a group of five class teachers who have middle leadership responsibilities. I met with a representative from the local authority and three representatives of the governing body. I considered the views of 24 parents as recorded on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's analysis of its own recent survey of parents' views. You and I visited classrooms together to observe pupils in their lessons and look at their work. I spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day and met with a group of pupils. I evaluated the school improvement plan, performance information and other records, including those related to safeguarding and pupil behaviour. Leaders' own evaluations of the school's performance were also taken account of.