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Mr D Edwards
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Edwards

Short inspection of Downsview Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 July 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

This continually improving school does a great job for its pupils. It meets their diverse and at times complex needs well. The school ensures that all pupils participate well and achieve to a good standard in a very wide range of different subjects and activities. You are very clear about the importance of helping your pupils to have high aspirations. Pupils really enjoy what is on offer. They feel encouraged, nurtured and supported to give of their best. They and their parents are understandably very pleased.

At its last inspection, the school was recommended to ensure that pupils could write and speak more confidently and at length. This has been very well achieved. The school has built up pupils' confidence to discuss purposefully, try things out, think for themselves and have a go. This really helps their learning. As one pupil put it, 'You give it another go. They [the staff] support you.'

You lead the school purposefully, thoughtfully and with ambition. You are well supported in this by other senior leaders and governors. Together, you consider what needs to be done carefully and then do it effectively. You are very clear about the importance of nurturing the pupils, and developing their skills across many disciplines. You have built a strong staff team; each member knows what he or she needs to do and why.

There are some areas for continuing development, which we discussed. Past results, in particular, from national tests and assessments do not do full justice to the good

quality work of current pupils that I saw on my visit. You have nevertheless worked hard with staff this year to improve further the good progress of pupils in key stage 2. You have ensured that writing is taught, for example, with additional rigour. Pupils have better opportunities to explain their mathematical learning clearly and logically. You have started to help pupils to show better what they can do in test situations. The interesting challenge ahead is to continue and build further your work to help pupils develop their resilience and learn more about how they can present themselves and their achievements.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the governing body have well-organised and effectively managed procedures for keeping pupils safe and assessing and managing risk. Staff are regularly trained in safeguarding procedures, which they clearly understand and are confident to use. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. Any who need particular support receive it in a timely way. The school makes systematic checks on staff and others who come into contact with the children when they are recruited, and as needed. The expansive school site is kept safe and secure.

Inspection findings

- As headteacher, you lead the school very well. Your ambition and vision for the school are absolutely clear. You have a real heart for, and understanding of, the community the school serves. You listen carefully to parents and other stakeholders when making decisions.
- Your senior staff support you very well. Each member of the senior team has well organised responsibilities, which complement each other closely. You all share the same vision, which is also understood and put into practice by the staff team as a whole.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics throughout the school. They do well from their mixed and sometimes low starting points. Historically, however, the national test results at Year 6 have not fully reflected the good quality and progress evident in the day-to-day work of the pupils. You have clear evidence of this which I saw. Unvalidated results this year are close to average, though reading is the weaker area, and this holds back the results somewhat.
- Some pupils' underperformance in test situations indicates the need for them to develop further the skills and strengths to show fully what they can do when they are not directly within the nurturing environment provided so well by the school.
- Pupils' writing that I saw is of a generally good standard. Pupils write clearly and purposefully. They employ interesting vocabulary and usually follow grammar and spelling rules accurately. They present their work with pride in a wide range of subjects and contexts.
- The pupils who read to me in Year 1 and Year 5 did so with enthusiasm, interest and good comprehension. They checked back if they did not understand something. Younger pupils, including those who had not met the expected standard in the national phonics screening, showed valuable skills and could

often self-correct when sounding out tricky words such as 'laughter', 'came' or 'children'. This indicates the school's successful and well-managed teaching of phonics. Pupils performed well in the formal Year 1 screening in 2016, as was the case in 2015.

- The teaching and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well managed and organised. Parents are systematically and valuably involved. The pupils concerned generally achieve well.
- Pupils who are entitled to the support of the pupil premium do well. They achieve as well as other pupils and sometimes surpass them. Pupil premium funding is spent carefully and suitably evaluated. You are not complacent though. Next year, you have appointed a member of staff as pupil premium champion to support these pupils further still. This indicates the school's clear ambition to tackle disadvantage head on.
- You evaluate the school honestly and accurately. You measure carefully pupils' well-being as well as their academic outcomes. The school improvement plan is well written. It is effective in guiding change and developments.
- You and your senior team work effectively and systematically with staff in developing teaching. Staff performance is appropriately managed. Pay decisions are made properly. Members of staff know what is expected of them and are very clear about how rigorous, but supportive, the process is. Teaching assistants and other non-teachers are fully included and they all make a very strong contribution to the school and pupils' learning and well-being.
- Pupils behave well. They are keen to learn in lessons. They are respectful of others and feel confident to contribute their ideas and thinking willingly. They respond positively to praise and take real responsibility in lessons. They are polite and behave sensibly and safely around the school.
- Occasional instances of serious misbehaviour are dealt with well by staff. One pupil summed this up when saying: 'When people feel upset or there's a bad problem, there are always people to support and solve it peacefully.'
- Parents like the school. Many contribute usefully; for example, to the assessments of children in the Reception class. You and the staff help parents to develop their own understanding and skills so that they can help their children outside of school hours.
- The school provides pupils with very clear, precise teaching about values. Pupils develop a strong understanding of fundamental British values, such as tolerance. The school rigorously encourages pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, work on understanding world religions and their importance is systematically carried out.
- In the lessons we observed together, pupils were consistently fully engaged in valuable learning tasks. These were generally well adapted by staff to suit pupils' particular needs. Staff explained things clearly and helped pupils to express themselves and explain their thinking. For example, in one lesson, the teacher persistently asked questions like, 'Why is that incorrect?' and 'Can you prove that to me?' which made pupils think carefully together. Throughout the school, pupils showed self-discipline in lessons. They are used to working and trying hard.

- Pupils enjoy a very broad curriculum. This is important to you and to them. I saw examples of very interesting work in history, geography, art, science and many other subjects. There are many successful visits out of school. I observed Year 6 pupils confidently preparing for an end-of-term production of Shakespeare's 'The tempest'; this involved them in vibrant acting and positive choral and solo singing.
- The subject leaders for English and mathematics do a first-rate job. Their work has developed well since the last inspection. For all of the other subjects, the leaders work hard and ensure that pupils enjoy a range of positive learning experiences. However, there is more yet to do to ensure that the provision in these subjects is really excellent, and highly challenging, as the school wants.
- The Reception class is well organised and managed. Children enjoy positive, well-planned activity indoors and outdoors. They develop their learning skills, such as extended concentration, well. Staff assess them closely and ask pupils good questions which deepen their thinking. For good reason, you are developing outdoor areas for use for pupils in Years 1 to 3.
- Pupils' attendance is average. Absence is well managed and followed up by the school. There are a very small number of recent fixed-term exclusions; the pupils concerned were quickly and successfully re-integrated into the school.
- The governing body has developed its work well. Governors bring to the school a good range of useful skills and experience. They are knowledgeable and highly committed. Governors usefully challenge and support the school. Their visits are useful and well connected to the school improvement plan. Governors agree that some of their monitoring reports and questioning could be more sharply focused and precisely recorded, so that issues are more crisply identified and followed up.
- The local authority supports the school valuably. For example, it has both supported and challenged the school to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics. It has correctly identified the school's strengths and the broad range of positive outcomes for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on their current, valuable work to help pupils develop the skills and resilience to ensure that they can increasingly present themselves and their achievements to best advantage including, when needed, in tests
- the roles of all subject leaders are developed further still, so that the existing broad curriculum becomes even more effective in building up pupils' skills and experience progressively and rigorously to a very high standard.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I visited lessons in all classes in the school, jointly with the headteacher. I scrutinised pupils' work, especially their writing. I heard a group of Year 1 boys read, and also heard readers from Years 1 and 5. I talked with pupils informally. I observed around the school, including at lunchtime. I held discussions with the headteacher, members of staff, governors, and an officer of the local authority. I looked carefully at the 60 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered confidential responses from pupils and members of staff to Ofsted's questionnaire. I evaluated documents, including school improvement plans, information about pupils' progress and minutes of meetings.