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Mrs J Perry  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Perry

### **Short inspection of Discovery Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 September 2016 with Denise James-Mason, 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 your school was judged to be good in January 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

You have tackled the areas identified for improvement from the last inspection effectively. Your priorities are well understood by both established and new staff in this growing school. Your recent decision to restructure middle leadership is helping everyone play a vital part in sustaining your success. Your year-group leaders can keep a close eye on maintaining standards of good practice as a result of these changes. They are encouraging less experienced colleagues to seek rapid support and advice when they need it. You ensure that teachers are very clear about the standards expected of them. This has led to a striking consistency in the positive impact of teaching on pupils' progress across the whole school.

You and your governors have recognised the importance of growing the skills of leaders. Senior leaders have driven up expectations as standards have improved. The local authority expresses confidence in your capacity to provide the places needed for young people as the community continues to expand. Your approach to this is guided by a careful consideration of the needs of pupils and their circumstances. Leaders and governors invest time and money wisely in ensuring that they build and maintain strong relationships with parents and external partners. The recent 'achievement for all' project is a successful example of this work. You and your governors rightly recognise that pupils entitled to additional funding are not the only ones who are disadvantaged in your school. You take effective account of this when making important decisions.

You have ensured that the gains made in standards in key stage 1 in 2015 have been sustained. The steps you have taken to improve the teaching of writing over time have been effective. Pupils are confident writers, capable of sustaining skills over extended pieces. The high standards and consistency you expect are reflected in the way teachers model good writing practice. Standards in spelling have risen as pupils have gained in confidence and recognised the importance of learning from their mistakes. Despite this success, you are not complacent and understand that further improvements are achievable. For example, you realise that the most able pupils would benefit from additional challenge to develop their writing style.

Governors understand the school's work well and provide you with robust challenge. They share a particular passion with you for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This has ensured that funding has been spent effectively to diminish the differences between their outcomes and those of others. In fact, these pupils now outperform other pupils nationally in some outcomes.

Your work to improve attendance is securing reductions to overall absence over time. However, you recognise that the attendance of some pupils remains too low, despite concerted efforts to reduce rates of persistent absence. Your close and extensive partnerships with colleagues outside the school are helping you to tackle this issue, particularly for those pupils whose pre-existing medical conditions may be a barrier to good attendance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have a thorough understanding of your school community and the risks which you must particularly consider when considering safeguarding. You ensure that training and guidance are understood by your growing staff, some of whom are at an early stage of their career. Your records related to safeguarding reflect the vigilance and urgency with which concerns are considered. Senior leaders and governors have learned about particular issues such as poverty, substance misuse and mental health concerns which are prevalent issues for some pupils in your school. As a result, you have established powerful partnerships with external experts who can provide suitable advice and guidance as soon as needed.

Your relations with parents have developed securely as the school has grown in size. This is as a result of determined leadership. You ensure that the parents of every new pupil receive a home visit. This strengthens your knowledge of pupils' families and circumstances. It also ensures that parents are left in no doubt about your safeguarding arrangements and expectations. However, these arrangements are not reflected fully in your written procedures and policies, including those available on the school's website.

## Inspection findings

- Your plans for improvement show that you have focused on appropriate priorities. For example, you recognise that standards in reading, although improving, are not as strong as those in writing and mathematics. We agreed that the progress of the most able pupils in reading should be a key focus in this short inspection. In 2015, this group had not made as much progress in reading as in other subjects. This included the most able disadvantaged pupils entitled to additional funding. Reading assessment records from the most recent school year show how this has improved. Pupils who read to inspectors could apply their more advanced skills confidently. They are selecting books well from a more demanding range of material that you have now provided for them.
- Middle leaders are using their strong knowledge of outcomes of individual pupils to sustain these improvements. However, you agree that this work to sustain the good progress of the most able pupils remains a priority. For example, you recognise that these pupils sometimes have difficulty in recognising unfamiliar vocabulary or phrases. This is particularly the case for pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 rose sharply in 2015. Your own information indicates that this has been sustained in 2016. For example, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics has continued to exceed the national average. Teachers in Year 1 share information with their colleagues in the early years effectively. This helps them plan effectively to build on the good work done to introduce children to early reading skills in the Nursery and Reception classes. Weaker readers heard by inspectors demonstrated the positive impact that this work is having on their progress.
- Your sharp focus on deepening teachers' skills and ensuring capable new staff are appointed has paid off. You have ensured that teachers who demonstrate effective practice are given the opportunity for promotion and can use their skills to drive further improvements. Teachers new to the school say that they can seek support as soon as they need it. Middle leaders agree that the organisation of leadership helps them to provide this.
- Discussions with leaders and pupils underline how well you use a deep knowledge of the community to improve communications with parents. For example, you realised that you needed to encourage parents to read a wider range of texts with their children, including those with links to cultures other than their own.
- Standards in writing have risen since the last inspection. The sample of pupils' writing seen by inspectors demonstrates the rapid progress pupils make from different starting points. Your own information indicates that disadvantaged pupils make similar, and often better, progress to others. The effective guidance that teachers provide to pupils emphasises the importance of learning from mistakes. This has helped build pupils' confidence. Your records show that attainment in spelling in 2016 has risen for pupils in key stage 2. Your insistence that teachers model good practice such as their own use of cursive script when marking work is also crucial to this success.

- Pupils in the specialist provision benefit from skilful teaching related to their particular needs. This good practice is echoed in the effective strategies used by teachers working with pupils who have similar needs in mainstream classes.
- You know that overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages for similar schools but persistent absence for a small group of pupils remains high. The needs of this group are often significant and complex. You are working well with partners beyond the school to keep up efforts to improve the attendance of these pupils.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the drive to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent is maintained, so that rates of persistent absence fall to national average levels
- information is used effectively to retain a sharp focus on improving standards in reading, particularly for the most able pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for the Royal London Borough of Greenwich.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with senior and middle leaders to discuss information about pupils' outcomes and your plans for improvement. We conducted a work scrutiny of reading records and pupils' writing with senior leaders. We met with a group of pupils and a teacher who was new to the school. We inspected documents related to safeguarding and behaviour. Inspectors also considered the 46 responses to the online Parent View survey, together with the school's own surveys of pupils' and parents' views. Both inspectors conducted tours of the school with senior leaders, talking to pupils about their work and hearing them read.