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Dear Ms Hamer

Short inspection of Vittoria Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 October 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 October 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your accurate evaluation of the school's work clearly directs your priorities for development and leads to improvements where they are needed.

You have effectively tackled weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection and have improved pupils' progress in reading and writing. Pupils practise reading and writing regularly across a wide range of curriculum subjects. For example, work in pupils' science books shows that teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in science are as high as in English books. Pupils regularly use the writing skills they learn in English lessons to write about the investigations they carry out in science sessions. Pupils' handwriting is typically fluent and neat.

In end of Year 6 assessments in 2015, rates of pupils' progress from different starting points were equally strong in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils at the school made faster progress than other pupils nationally from similar starting points.

Children's standards at the end of the Reception Year have risen steadily year on year and children make swift progress from their starting points. This is because leaders have taken a range of effective actions to bring about improvements. For example, last year, you increased children's opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills in the outdoor areas. As a result of this, and other initiatives, provisional assessments at the end of the Reception Year in 2016 suggest that

children were well prepared for the start of Year 1 and that the proportion of children reaching average standards in reading and writing rose considerably.

In key stage 1, pupils at risk of falling behind in reading are not well supported to build their knowledge of phonics and catch up quickly. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is below the national average. You have identified this correctly as a key priority for improvement.

The previous inspection found that there was more work to do to make sure that pupils are encouraged to evaluate the progress that they make and know what they need to do to improve further. You have addressed this well and teachers' feedback to pupils about their work makes clear what pupils might do to improve. Pupils frequently support their peers' learning by checking the quality of one another's work. Teachers generally use information from assessments of pupils' progress to set tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teaching assistants support the learning of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. Occasionally, tasks for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not as well selected to help them attain the highest standards.

Over recent years, senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils have worked closely together and developed the school's strong sense of its shared aims and ideals. In assembly, pupils proudly recite the school's creed. They are keen to be recognised for modelling the school's values of adaptability, ambition, creativity, resilience and respect. Pupils demonstrate caring attitudes. Older pupils are considerate and look after the younger ones at breaktime. The Vittoria pupil mediators enthusiastically play their part in ensuring that breaktime is enjoyable for everyone. Pupils told me that any instances of bullying are rare and that the staff take swift and effective action to sort any problems, as the school's records show. Parents and carers were positive about the school and confident that the school is persistent in sorting any concerns that may arise.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Training is effective in making sure that staff recognise possible signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff know what action they are expected to take should they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Staff are aware that they each have a role to play in making sure that pupils are looked after and safe. They know that it is their duty to prevent pupils being drawn into situations which put them at significant risk of harm.

The school works in partnership with parents and a range of safeguarding agencies, and follows up any concerns rapidly. Leaders provide guidance for parents, such as workshops on the use of information and communication technology, in order to support them in keeping their children safe from harm. Leaders provide a wide range of helpful advice for pupils to develop their understanding of risks, for instance how to cross the road safely and how to keep safe on 'bonfire night'.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, managers and governors have made sure that the curriculum captures pupils' interest and encourages pupils' positive attitudes to school. Pupils' neat and careful presentation of their written work reflects the pride they take in learning. Activities during subject-focused weeks, for example in science, mathematics and literacy, encourage pupils' curiosity and enthusiasm.
- Through the links you have established with local cultural centres, pupils benefit from high-quality creative experiences, including singing, dance and drama. This year, you have been successful in securing the science mark gold and London healthy school silver awards. This reflects the many strengths in the school's curriculum.
- Pupils practise reading, writing and mathematics across a wide range of subjects, and this helps to build pupils' key skills as they progress through the school. In science investigations, for example, pupils use mathematics to create charts and graphs to show their findings. They write thoughtful descriptions of science investigations.
- Teachers set pupils tasks at different degrees of difficulty in order to meet the range of pupils' abilities. In the past, assessment information shows that the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils reached high standards in reading, writing and mathematics assessments at the end of Year 6. Assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2016 were more demanding than in previous years and provisional results suggest that fewer pupils attained a high standard in reading, writing and mathematics. During our joint visits to lessons, we noticed that expectations of the most able pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, are sometimes not challenging enough to help them attain the highest standards in their work.
- Pupils enjoy reading and appreciate the variety of books they can choose to read in the class and main school libraries. Pupils in Year 6 told me about their reading preferences and their favourite authors. Improvements to the teaching of reading and writing in early years have secured better reading and writing outcomes for children at the end of the Reception Year. You have identified that pupils in key stage 1 at risk of falling behind in reading are not encouraged to develop reading confidence and phonics skills as well as in Reception. As a result, they are not helped to catch up quickly enough. You have appropriate plans in place to address this urgently.
- You make sure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged strongly. Throughout the school, relationships are warm and friendly. Parents of children in the early years made a point of saying how well their children settled when they started. During my visit, I observed children in the toddlers group and children in the Nursery class playing happily together and sharing equipment in the outdoor spaces. Parents of pupils who have joined the school part way through their primary education were pleased with the academic and personal progress their children have made since moving to the school. Pupils' personal and social skills are fostered very well. Pupils work consistently well together in lessons and listen sensibly to each other's ideas. Visits to local places of worship

encourage understanding, respect and tolerance of others and diverse cultures and faiths.

- Leaders have successfully ensured that the whole school community is aware of the importance of pupils' regular attendance and good punctuality. As a result, the school's attendance rates have risen over recent years and the attendance of pupils who were persistently absent from school has improved. Weekly celebration of the class with the best punctuality and attendance encourages pupils' above average attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 1 at risk of falling behind in reading are helped to build their knowledge of phonics securely and develop confidence in reading
- expectations of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are demanding.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for Islington. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The HMI agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- Are leaders' actions raising pupils' outcomes in reading across the school? Is there a systematic approach to teaching phonics?
- Are leaders' actions increasing rates of progress for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils?
- How have leaders successfully improved pupils' outcomes in writing by the end of Year 6?

The HMI carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- meetings with you and the deputy headteacher
- a discussion with three governors, including the chair of the governing body
- a discussion with the literacy leader
- visits to the toddlers group and classes from Nursery to Year 6 to observe teaching and look at pupils' work
- conversations with pupils in lessons and around the school
- evaluation of recent information about pupils' academic outcomes
- listening to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 6
- informal discussions with parents in the playground at the start of the day.