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Mr Babar Mirza
Headteacher
Islamia Primary School
129 Salusbury Road
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Dear Mr Mirza

Short inspection of Islamia Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 November 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

While new to the post of headteacher this academic year, you know the school well through your previous role as deputy headteacher. In your leadership roles, you have rightly prioritised the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You have provided leadership development opportunities for subject and middle leaders so they have become more involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching across the school.

Since taking on your headship, you have developed leadership further. You have recognised and built on the strengths of your team and restructured the leadership team accordingly. Through senior leaders' careful and thoughtful guidance, subject and middle leaders are increasingly well placed to take on more responsibilities, for example by leading staff training. Leaders are growing in confidence to hold teachers to account for the quality of teaching because of the valuable coaching you and other experienced senior leaders provide. The completion of external training further enhances their roles.

You have extended and deepened leaders' analysis of information about pupils' achievements. Your regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress involve subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator, as well as teachers. As a result, the right support is put in place promptly to help individual pupils if they are

not making the progress you expect. You recognise that the school could do more to ensure that most-able pupils, including most-able disadvantaged pupils, reach the high standards of which they are capable, especially in reading. Your careful analysis has identified key areas which pupils need to improve and you have put in place a range of appropriate strategies, for example to develop pupils' vocabulary and comprehension.

Similarly to the school leadership team, the governing body comprises members with varied levels of experience of leadership. Those who are comparatively new to their role are actively engaged in training and development opportunities so that they understand and fulfil their responsibilities well. Governors have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for continued improvement in the school.

The values of the school are firmly rooted in the Islamic faith. The pupils' timetable includes Arabic and Islamic studies alongside the lessons covering the national curriculum. You ensure that pupils have opportunities across a wide range of subjects to improve their skills in reading, writing and mathematics so that they make good progress.

You and your staff are committed to promoting close and positive relationships within and beyond the local community. You broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of faiths and cultures other than their own. Pupils set high standards for themselves and others, led by the example of their teachers, upholding the importance of mutual respect, friendliness and being kind to others.

You have introduced a range of opportunities to boost the school's communications with parents. You run coffee mornings and workshops to provide parents with helpful information and guidance so that they feel more confident supporting their child's learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including the governing body, make sure they are well informed about the latest safeguarding requirements. Leaders ensure that all staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. The single central record indicates that leaders make all required checks of staff.

Staff use the behaviour policy fairly and consistently and are effective in helping pupils to improve their behaviour as needed. Pupils are adamant that incidents of poor behaviour are rare. The majority of parents who completed Parent View, the online survey, agree that their child feels safe in the school and that pupils are well behaved. Pupils who spoke to me described how assemblies regularly emphasise the importance of love, friendship and consideration for others. Your clear message has made a difference in helping pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils take part in competitions and develop their communication skills, producing posters and making speeches to their peers as part of your initiatives to promote anti-bullying.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to keep the school site secure, including the separate building which houses three classes. Pupils say they feel safe in school

and there are no areas in the school where they feel unsafe. They are well versed in ways in which to keep safe, for example when working online and why this is important. Leaders are alert to risks within the wider community, including radicalisation and female genital mutilation. Staff follow up concerns rapidly and effectively, providing valuable information and reassurance to parents.

Leaders' close monitoring means that they act promptly when pupils' attendance and punctuality need to be better. Leaders emphasise to parents the importance of reducing levels of absence; as a result, attendance at school continues to improve and is above the national average. Leaders wisely commission further support when they have wider concerns about pupils' well-being.

Inspection findings

- Subject leaders and middle leaders have gained appropriate training and experience so that they have an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. They support their colleagues to develop their practice further and improve, acting swiftly when the quality of teaching is ever less than good.
- Leaders regularly review pupils' progress so that they can identify promptly those who are falling behind and provide them with the support they need to catch up. Leaders recognise that to improve the rates of progress of most-able pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in reading is a priority. They have put in place additional strategies and support accordingly.
- Leaders' close analysis of test results accurately identified key areas pupils needed to improve, such as broadening their vocabulary to boost their comprehension. Teachers extend regular spelling tests so that pupils readily apply new words to the correct context of their writing.
- Pupils read frequently. Reading logs indicate ways in which pupils have improved their reading. Pupils are developing their use of more complex vocabulary because of their teachers' encouragement. Pupils use a wide range of resources effectively to help them if they get stuck.
- Subject leaders make sure that pupils' literacy skills are boosted across all subjects. Teachers introduce subject-specific, technical vocabulary at the start of each topic to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding quickly. This is of particular benefit to those pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Leaders also recognise the significant impact of the support some pupils receive from home. They communicate regularly with parents to let them know about the subjects pupils study. Leaders are considerate of key areas of learning in which some parents might feel less confident helping their child. As a result, leaders run special events, for example to show parents calculation methods used in school, or to help some parents develop their use of English.
- Leaders ensure that intervention groups are effective so that pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved. Leaders have allocated the pupil premium funding appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils. The differences in their outcomes in mathematics compared with others nationally have diminished substantially.
- Leaders' well-planned training has enabled teachers to be more confident in teaching complex aspects of the mathematics curriculum. Leaders have clear

expectations that teachers incorporate the right level of challenge for the most able pupils in their planning. Routines to enable pupils to reflect on and improve their work and deepen their thinking have become rapidly embedded because of subject leaders' raised expectations. Pupils say that their work in mathematics is rarely too easy. However, there are some inconsistencies across year groups. Pupils sometimes do not move on to more complex tasks swiftly enough or respond to their teachers' feedback productively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies to improve outcomes in reading, especially for the most able pupils, and the most able disadvantaged pupils, become fully embedded
- levels of challenge are consistently high enough in lessons across the school so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

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

- the impact of the development of middle leadership in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- actions taken by leaders to ensure that most-able pupils make the progress of which they are capable in reading
- actions taken by leaders to improve outcomes for pupils in mathematics.

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

- She held meetings with school leaders and representatives of the governing body. She had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. She toured the school, visiting all classes, accompanied by school leaders. The inspector met with pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 and listened to pupils read. She held informal conversations with staff and pupils during the day.

- The inspector scrutinised a range of school documentation including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. She took into account the responses to the Ofsted survey completed by staff and to Parent View. There were no responses to the survey circulated to pupils.