

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Ms Samantha Smith  
Beckford Primary School  
Dornfell Street  
West Hampstead  
London  
NW6 1QL

Dear Ms Smith

### **Short inspection of Beckford Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2017, 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 July 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your strong leadership and drive for continuous improvement have ensured that pupils make good progress and achieve well. Your forensic analysis of pupils' progress is highly effective in ensuring that leaders are clear about which aspects of the school's work could be even better. Leaders also make careful use of this analysis to prioritise and evaluate the impact of their actions to improve outcomes for all pupils.

At the last inspection, you were asked to ensure that additional adults are deployed to their best effect to support pupils' learning. You and your leaders have been effective in developing the skills of additional staff through carefully planned training and support. Your own monitoring and our visits to lessons show that additional adults provide effective support that helps pupils move on in their learning. The other area for improvement was to increase pupils' opportunities to develop their mathematics skills further across a range of curriculum areas. In the 2016 key stage 2 statutory assessments, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in mathematics was below the national average. You have identified that pupils' achievement in mathematics needs to be improved so a greater proportion acquire the knowledge and skills expected for their age. Your own information shows that the current pupils are making good progress in mathematics across the year groups. Leaders are working effectively with teachers to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teaching is increasingly focused on promoting mathematics across the curriculum. However, you acknowledge that pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 need further opportunities to develop their reasoning skills to help speed

up the rates of progress that they make.

Leaders are meticulous in monitoring pupils' progress, including different groups across the school. You ensure that pupils who do not make sufficient progress are provided with timely and effective support. In this way, using your phrase, 'no child is left behind'. You have developed a strong team of middle leaders who monitor their subject areas well and hold teachers to account for the progress that their pupils make. This is contributing to the school's capacity to improve further.

Governors are skilful, highly committed and share your high expectations for pupils. They know the school well, including its strengths and areas for development. They provide effective support and challenge so that the school continues to improve. Governors value your leadership highly. They share your ambition for pupils and for the school to be even better. They receive high-quality information from you on how well pupils are doing and make regular visits to the school to find out for themselves what learning is like for pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They have created a culture in the school where safeguarding pupils is paramount and staff have collective responsibility. You ensure that there is regular training for all staff so that they have the appropriate knowledge and understanding to respond to all aspects of safeguarding. Your detailed records show that you and your designated safeguarding lead work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the support and protection they need. You work well with vulnerable families to ensure the safety and welfare of their children. Referrals are made in a timely manner and any concerns are followed up effectively. Overall, your arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are robust and your records are detailed and well maintained.

Pupils told me that they always feel safe at school. A large majority of the 54 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are kept safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, we agreed to review the progress of pupils in mathematics at key stage 2. This was because the proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained the expected standard was below the national average in 2016. Our visits to the classrooms, my scrutiny of pupils' books and your progress information show that pupils are making good progress overall in mathematics.
- You have introduced a mathematics mastery programme in Years 1 to 4. This is having a positive impact on the progress your current pupils are making through reinforcing and consolidating their understanding of mathematical concepts. You will now be introducing this programme in Year 5 and Year 6 to accelerate the progress that pupils make in mathematics.
- The leadership of mathematics is strong. Teachers and support staff are provided

with effective support and training to improve their quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics. They use assessment information effectively to plan learning which builds on what pupils already know and can do. This ensures that pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils told me that they enjoy learning mathematics and that it is well taught. Occasionally, some lower-attaining pupils do not complete their work before they move on to a different mathematical concept. This leaves gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

- We also reviewed pupils' reading. Although pupils' attainment in reading at key stages 1 and 2 was broadly average in 2016, progress in reading was weaker than in writing, particularly in key stage 2. We visited several classrooms together to observe the quality of reading. Adults listen to pupils read regularly and provide them with the support they need to improve. Pupils were engaged in reading and their reading records show that they read regularly, including at home. They said that they have access to a range of books to capture their interest. Pupils were keen to show me the 'stars' they receive when they have completed reading a book. These are appropriately displayed on the classroom walls. You celebrate reading through a range of strategies, including holding a 'book week', inviting authors to the school and giving out awards for reading. Your current information shows that pupils make good progress in reading across key stages 1 and 2 and are acquiring the reading skills expected for their age.
- The standards achieved by pupils in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have been above average in 2014 and 2015. However, in 2016 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard dropped to below average. You have analysed carefully the reasons why individual pupils did not achieve the expected standard. You, quite rightly, monitor these pupils in Year 2 to ensure that they receive additional support to improve their reading and catch up quickly. Overall, current pupils in Years 1 and 2 use their phonic skills well to read unfamiliar or difficult words. We also observed some effective learning of phonics in a Reception class. Overall, the leadership and teaching of reading is strong.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test was below the national average, especially in spelling. You said that improving pupils' spelling is an area that leaders and staff are focusing on.
- We observed learning in lessons where spellings were taught. Teachers plan challenging tasks for pupils to reinforce their spelling. In Year 4, for example, pupils were highly engaged in playing a crossword game to improve their spelling. Pupils have their own bank of spellings to learn and use in sentences. They refer to classroom displays to help them remember important rules. Pupils enjoy doing their '10 minutes test' to improve their English, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. However, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with clear explanations that help them to improve their spelling skills and knowledge. As a result, some pupils continue to make occasional spelling mistakes in their written work.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- lower-attaining pupils routinely complete their work in mathematics to ensure that there are no gaps in their knowledge and understanding of key concepts
- mastery in mathematics, particularly in relation to pupils' thinking and reasoning skills, is embedded in Years 5 and 6 to deepen pupils' understanding and improve the progress they make
- pupils are routinely provided with guidance on how to improve their spelling skills.

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

Yours sincerely

Avtar Sherri  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

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

- the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school
- the action taken to improve pupils' progress in mathematics, especially at key stage 2
- the action taken to improve pupils' reading
- the action taken to improve pupils' spelling at key stage 2.

I carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection.

- I met with you, leaders and governors to review your evaluation of the school's effectiveness.
- I visited lessons with you to observe learning.
- I looked at a range of documents, including the school's safeguarding arrangements and records and those related to recruitment.
- I scrutinised books and information on pupils' progress.
- I listened to pupils read in classrooms, as well as listening formally to Year 2 pupils read.
- I held a meeting with a group of pupils to discuss their views about their learning and safety.
- A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- I considered 54 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), including 53 free text responses. I also considered six responses to the staff questionnaire.