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Brian Welsh  
Headteacher  
St John's Upper Holloway CofE Primary School  
Pemberton Gardens  
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London  
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Dear Mr Welsh

### **Short inspection of St John's Upper Holloway CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 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 February 2012.

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

Since the school's previous inspection, you and your deputy have provided the school with stable leadership. This has allowed leaders and governors to consolidate and build on improvements that had begun at that time. The leadership team also includes three middle leaders, who have responsibility for leading key stages and subjects. You are ensuring that they have the right training to develop their leadership expertise. The governing body supports you well. It voluntarily underwent a review of governance and re-structured in order to be more effective. Governors are providing increasing challenge to the school.

As a result of these changes, leaders and governors have good capacity to continue making improvements. Challenges, like the one the school has experienced recently due to staff changes, are managed without having a negative impact on the good quality of education provided.

In the school's previous inspection report, it was recommended that leaders improve the teaching of reading at key stage 1. This has been tackled effectively and consequently, in 2016, overall outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose and were in line with the national average. However, disadvantaged pupils and boys did not attain as well as other pupils nationally. You recognise that, in this area, there is more to do and have changed your approach to phonics this year to improve phonics outcomes further.

Parents, governors and staff are proud of the inclusive ethos at the school. Your deputy works effectively to ensure that the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities allows them to progress well in their learning. The parents of these children feel fully supported by school leaders and other staff.

Parents are confident in your leadership approach, which one described as 'relaxed but exacting ... inspiring children and parents alike'. They are confident entrusting their children's education to you and feel that their children are happy coming to school. Parents described a welcoming, supportive school where there is a strong sense of community. From the moment I stepped through the door, the 'family feel' they spoke of was evident.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The pupils told me that they feel safe at school and know who to talk to if they are worried about issues such as bullying. They were confident that you and your staff would resolve problems. They talked about e-safety and anti-bullying lessons where they learn how to stay safe.

The parents I spoke to told me that they feel their children are safe at the school and they are confident to speak to staff if they have any concerns. They appreciate the fact that they are kept well informed and that staff report any concerns to them straightaway. They were happy that their children are learning about road safety.

As designated safeguarding lead, you have made sure that your training, as well as training for staff, is up to date, and includes the most recent statutory guidance. You understand child protection issues that relate to your school context. The case studies you talked me through and other information you gave me showed that concerns are followed through effectively. This includes involving outside agencies and social care where appropriate. You ensure safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and clear.

### **Inspection findings**

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average. Governors allocate additional funding in a range of ways to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, including the employment of an additional teacher in key stage 2. By the end of key stage 2, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is better than that of other pupils nationally. However, in some year groups disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well as they could. This is particularly the case for outcomes in the early years, in the phonics screening check and for those pupils with low prior attainment in key stage 1.
- In order to evaluate the impact of leaders' work to address these differences, we visited lessons and looked at work in pupils' books. Pupils in these year groups receive a range of additional support to help them with their learning. However, this support is not always sharply focused on ensuring that all pupils develop the skills and understanding expected for their age. As a result, some pupils are not making the faster rates of progress needed to help them achieve as well as

other pupils nationally.

- School information indicates that, when compared to the national average, a much larger proportion of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, we agreed that I would consider the school's provision for these pupils and the impact it has on their progress. Work in pupils' books showed that pupils are making good progress. Together with senior leaders, you have ensured that pupils have individual learning programmes that are personalised to their needs. Your assessment information showed that this is helping these pupils to make good progress in relation to their targets. Overall, the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school.
- I also considered the progress of boys in the current Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. In 2016, by the end of Year 6, boys' progress overall in reading and mathematics was in the top 10% of schools nationally. This is a strength. However, leaders and governors recognise that there are differences in boys' achievement in some year groups, both relative to girls at the school and to boys nationally. The school's information about outcomes, including work in pupils' books, shows that this is the case in the early years, key stage 1 and Year 3. Leaders are using a range of strategies to improve outcomes for boys in these year groups; however, some of their actions are at too early a stage to have significantly diminished these differences.
- Tackling poor attendance is a key focus for the school. This is because pupils' attendance has been below the national average for three years. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also a concern, as is their level of persistent absence. To address this, the school has engaged the services of a school home support worker. Effective partnerships with parents of children with poor attendance have already made a difference with some families. Last year, pupils' overall attendance improved significantly and is now just below the national average. Persistent absence is also lower now than at this point last year.
- However, you recognise that there is still work to be done to reduce rates of absence. This is reflected in your current plans for improvement. Analysis of attendance information is not always carried out in sufficient depth to ensure that concerns regarding groups of pupils are identified and tackled swiftly. Consequently, leaders are not always clear about where to target additional support or the impact of the strategies they have put in place. I am confident that leaders understand what actions they need to take to address this and that they are giving these actions high priority.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, compared to other pupils nationally, are diminishing quickly, particularly in the early years and in the phonics screening check

- pupils' absence is monitored with greater rigour so that swift action is taken to ensure that no groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance, and that attendance continues to improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Franklin  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

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

- listening to parents' feedback about the school and analysing the 16 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents
- meeting the school staff
- holding a discussion with you and your deputy about the strengths and weaknesses at the school
- joint visits to lessons in most year groups with you and your deputy. This also gave me the opportunity to review the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- reviewing work in pupils' books, with a particular focus on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- meeting with your school improvement partner from the Diocese of London
- meeting with representatives from the governing body
- meeting with a group of pupils where I asked them for their views of the school
- hearing a group of pupils read and discussing reading with them
- meeting with you to review safeguarding arrangements
- meeting with your school home support worker about pupils' attendance
- analysing a range of documents, including your self-evaluation, monitoring information, and reports written by your school improvement partner.