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Mrs Eleesa Dowding
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Dowding

Short inspection of Harmondsworth Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 March 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You lead and manage your school very well. You have successfully tackled the recommendations from the previous inspection, and have improved the school's work in these and other areas. You are strongly supported by staff who showed in their wholly positive response to Ofsted's online survey of their views, that they share your values. All the leaders I spoke to also share your values and have a firm grip on what they are doing. The governing body knows the school well. Convincing evidence was provided of the impact of governance on maintaining the school's good qualities and helping you to build on them. Leaders also explained the range of new sports available as a result of additional government funding for primary sports. Strong evidence showed how staff are well trained to continue the benefits of the funding should it end.

In a small school, where senior and middle leaders have classroom responsibilities, inevitably a great deal of day-to-day management falls to the headteacher. You do this with admirable competence and unflappability. It was a pleasure to walk around the school with you and observe how no detail is overlooked, from picking up fallen coats to asking how a child's family is getting on. You have managed the recent changes in senior and middle leadership effectively. You are skilled in opening up opportunities for staff to step into leadership roles. This ensures that leadership remains rock solid in the face of change.

Safeguarding is effective.

With the support you receive from senior and middle leaders, and from governors, you have created a safe and secure school, where you make sure that pupils' safety is of paramount importance. All leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and that records of all safeguarding issues are up to date and detailed. Checks on all adults who have any contact with children are stringent. You double-check assurances by agencies and contractors that staff have been checked. Procedures for referring children to the local authority in the event of any safeguarding issues are tight and known to staff. All adults receive training in all aspects of safeguarding, including how to recognise signs of possible female genital mutilation and how to spot evidence of radicalisation. Staff and governor training in safeguarding is up to date and regularly reviewed, ensuring, for example, that all adults are alert to key risks such as domestic violence.

Inspection findings

- Pupils benefit from a good quality of education in a safe and nurturing environment. Although the school is in the shadow of Heathrow Airport, it has the feel of a village school. Staff know each pupil very well, and pupils trust the adults. All the pupils I spoke to told me they feel safe and get on well with other children. Pupils understand what bullying means and all the different forms it can take, including cyber bullying. They assured me that there is no bullying. One pupil explained that children behave badly if there is an issue at home and in that case, in the words of the pupil, 'I feel sad for them.'
- Since the previous inspection the school has not stood still. There were two recommendations made in that inspection, one to improve the teaching of phonics, the other to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. The school's accurate self-evaluation shows that you have addressed these issues effectively. Phonics results are now consistently in line with national averages, both in Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils who read aloud to me showed a confident grasp of how to tackle unfamiliar words by using their phonics skills. When it comes to mathematics, published information shows that progress, in common with reading and writing, was above average in both 2015 and 2016. I was able to confirm that pupils' progress in mathematics remains at least good when I visited lessons and looked at a sample of pupils' workbooks.
- One area we agreed to focus on during the inspection was how well pupils in Years 1 and 2 were learning. Published information shows that in 2016 there were a few pockets of weakness for small groups of pupils in key stage 1. I visited Years 1 and 2 to evaluate how well pupils are learning, and found that pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in their learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 1 English were inventing a house in Harmondsworth and describing it. This activity allowed pupils the freedom to be creative, and one wrote, 'The house has a spotless telescope because you want to look at the beautiful view.'
- Another area I explored was how effectively the most able pupils are helped to

learn as well as possible, particularly those in key stage 2. I was reassured through visiting all the year groups in key stage 2 that pupils were learning well. In Year 5 science, for example, pupils enjoyed sharing their knowledge, gained through good teaching over time, of the planets and their movement in relation to the sun. I spoke to a sample of the most able pupils in a number of classes, and they told me that they felt the level of challenge was right for them.

- You provided convincing evidence that some of the areas we explored together were related to specific groups of pupils. For example, in the 2016 phonics screening checks, scores for the small groups of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 did not match the much stronger phonics outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in Year 1. You knew each pupil and could account for why they had not done as well as their Year 1 peers. Through discussion with yourself and leaders and through direct observation, I concluded that there are no consistent areas of weakness for pupils in key stage 1. Much the same explanation applies to higher levels of persistent absence among such groups as disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In practice, numbers are tiny, and you accounted for the special circumstances relating to each persistent absentee.
- Pupils throughout the school, from the youngest in the early years provision, to those who will be leaving in July 2017, respect the beliefs and background of others. Pupils told me that they are taught about world religions, including, in the words of one pupil, 'people who believe in the Darwin system'. They assured me that no one is ridiculed or teased for their faith or heritage. Tolerance of others is embedded in the curriculum. We visited one Year 3 class together where pupils were reading Michael Rosen's 'This is our house', a book that challenges prejudice in child-friendly language. Pupils engaged fully with the concept of 'disrespect' and showed through their ideas that they understand the British values of tolerance and the rule of law.
- Your school is popular with parents. All of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that they would recommend the school to others. I endorse the comment from one parent, typical of many that I heard, that 'my child is well supported and looked after at the school. Any time I have wanted to discuss anything with the teachers they have been available and given their time to listen and reassure me.'
- Parents, grandparents and carers whom I spoke to all agree that yours is a good school. This was also true of the one or two parents who voiced some concern about how the school is handling support for their children who have additional needs. I discussed these concerns with you and other leaders. Around one third of your pupils have some degree of special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils make good progress, in line with their peers. Although I was assured that the school is doing all it can, I was not fully satisfied that the parents involved are sufficiently helped to understand what the school is doing. I am therefore recommending that the school reassures parents and shares more closely with them what the school is doing to provide for their children's needs.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they communicate more clearly with parents, particularly those who have any concerns about the steps being taken to support their child's specific needs and what the school is doing to support their children.

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

Yours sincerely

Natalia Power
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

You and I worked closely together throughout this inspection. We visited classes throughout the school and saw pupils learning a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. We also visited topic lessons in which pupils were learning about such thought-provoking ideas as how manufacturers make chocolate wrappers irresistible to children. I talked to pupils about how well they are learning, and looked at samples of their work. A group of pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read aloud to me and talked about how the school encourages them to read. I met another group of pupils from key stage 2 to find out their views on the school. I also chatted to some key stage 2 pupils informally at breaktime.

I spoke to a number of parents, grandparents and carers at the start of the day. I also considered 26 responses to Parent View. I considered 30 responses from staff to Ofsted's survey and two responses from pupils.

I held meetings with you about the school's self-evaluation and about safeguarding. We discussed the key lines of enquiry that underpinned the inspection. I also met with the chair of the governing body and other school leaders.