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Mrs Wendy Otterburn-Hall  
Headteacher  
Halley Primary School  
Halley Street  
London  
E14 7SS

Dear Mrs Otterburn-Hall

### **Short inspection of Halley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 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 April 2013.

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

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

Since the previous inspection, you and your leadership team have ensured that the quality of education in the school remains good despite significant changes in leadership and teaching staff in recent years. Closer working with colleagues in other schools and making use of the expertise from the local authority have helped to develop your middle leaders. Leaders at all levels share a strong determination to sustain good teaching and build on pupils' achievements. There is a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils typically make good progress across all subjects, in all key stages. The impact of the actions you have taken is evident in the consistently improving pupils' outcomes.

During my discussions with pupils, one of them said, 'there is a strong bond between teachers and pupils in our school.' You have created a school community where pupils from a wide range of backgrounds feel a deep sense of belonging. Pupils and adults alike respect each other's views, faiths and backgrounds. The support you provide to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly tailored to their individual requirements.

During the inspection, behaviour was exemplary in the lessons we visited. Pupils are engaged, motivated and focused. They respond to teachers' high expectations. Pupils say that adults always encourage them not to give up.

While most parents and carers are appreciative of the work of the school, a small group of parents were unhappy about recent changes to the school's policy on educational visits. Some parents feel that they do not receive information about staff changes promptly. Governors and the leadership team are aware of this and they know that they can reach out to them by improving the way they report to parents.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Your staff and governors are highly committed to keeping pupils safe in a secure, nurturing environment. Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Records are detailed and up to date, and are of high quality. School leaders ensure that staff recruitment procedures are robust and follow the principles of best practice.

Your pupils say that they feel safe at school. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe at home, at school or online. Even the youngest pupils can articulate strategies for staying safe online, saying they had a number of lessons from their computing teacher on this subject. Pupils are confident that they can go to the nearest adult if they have any concerns or worries.

You work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that pupils and families access the support they require. As designated safeguarding lead, you are resolute in your dealings with the local authority's children's services. You ensure that all referrals are followed up robustly. Records show that you are not afraid to challenge some of the actions of external agencies, in order to ensure that your families receive the best support possible.

### **Inspection findings**

- In our initial discussion, we identified attainment in mathematics and reading as a key line of enquiry, particularly of the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2. Pupils' work shows that they have opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills. Pupils' progress in arithmetic is accelerated by frequent practice. Teachers ensure that pupils receive appropriate levels of challenge in lessons. Pupils have opportunities to solve mathematical problems in a variety of contexts, which helps to deepen their understanding.
- Mathematics teaching strongly promotes the development of pupils' investigative skills. Teachers encourage pupils to make use of trial and error and to record their calculations as they are working to enable them to think deeply. Consequently, the most able pupils in key stage 2, including the most able disadvantaged, demonstrate strong progress over time. Work in books shows that these pupils typically exceed age-expected standards in mathematics.
- Following the disappointing results in reading in 2016, leaders have reviewed reading provision, particularly in key stage 2. Pupils have more opportunities to develop their comprehension skills, including those necessary for them to make accurate inference and deduction. Pupils regularly engage in purposeful discussions with teachers, evaluating how authors use language and the impact of this on the reader.
- Pupils have access to a wide range of reading materials, in school and at home. The

pupils that read to me demonstrated a good understanding of the use of punctuation to aid intonation and expression. Pupils use a wide range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. However, the most able readers, including the most able disadvantaged, are not challenged consistently well to exceed expected standards. This is because teachers do not always use strategies or questioning that deepens pupils' understanding of texts.

- Another key line of enquiry focused on the attainment of pupils in mathematics in key stage 1. Samples of work reflect the fact that teachers support pupils effectively to develop their mathematical vocabulary. Pupils who need to catch up receive effective support from additional adults, enabling these pupils to be successful and make progress in mathematics. Teaching makes effective use of concrete and pictorial examples to develop pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Pupils respond positively to teachers' instructions, completing tasks on time, and demonstrating progress in mathematics. However, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, do not get enough opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills. They do not always develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Consequently, only a very small proportion of key stage 1 pupils exceed age-expected standards in mathematics.
- We also focused on the early years foundation stage as another key line of enquiry. The school's early years setting is a safe, secure and highly engaging learning environment. Children are confident and they display resilience in their learning. Children show highly developed social skills. They share and take turns when interacting with other children. There are positive relationships among children and adults in the setting.
- Activities in the early years encourage independent learning, and children engage in both reflective and active play, indoors and outdoors. Adults effectively intervene to extend children's learning either through questioning or providing suggestions and guidance to children. The decision of school leaders to invest heavily in the development of the youngest children in school is paying off. The differences between the achievement of disadvantaged and that of other children in the setting are diminishing.
- Finally, I looked at the attendance of pupils. School leaders have taken action to improve pupils' attendance, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Purposeful partnerships with parents and external agencies, together with close monitoring by the inclusion team, ensure that pupils' absence is followed up rigorously. Where appropriate, pupils who are absent from school due to continuing medical needs receive tasks to complete at home so they do not fall behind with their learning.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged consistently well to reach their full potential in reading
- in key stage 1, the most able pupils have opportunities to practise and apply their

mathematical skills in a range of contexts, so that a greater proportion exceed age-expected standards

- communication with parents is consistently effective, so that all parents are well informed about important changes to the school's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Edison David  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you, the assistant headteachers, and with middle leaders. I also considered 28 responses to Parent View. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and their views on learning and behaviour in general. I held discussions with the local authority's representative and I met with three governors. I also considered the school's own documentation, including information posted on the school's website. I looked at recruitment files, the single central record and the analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with you, I visited classes to observe learning and we looked at samples of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics. I listened to pupils of all abilities reading.