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4 July 2017

Mr Nicholas Tait  
Headteacher  
Montem Primary School  
Hornsey Road  
London  
N7 7QT

Dear Mr Tait

### **Short inspection of Montem Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 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 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. You have successfully worked with governors to strengthen the school leadership team so that actions are successfully carried out to support the school's improvement priorities. Your senior and middle leaders work well together with you and take joint responsibility for bringing about improvement. Leaders' enthusiasm follows through into carefully thought-out plans and actions that you collectively consider will make a difference. These follow through into work with teachers and careful checking to make sure that the actions are successful, and that pupils are benefiting.

Governors support plans to improve achievement and they challenge you and leaders to make sure that the actions are the most appropriate ones to take. However, whereas pupil achievement in national assessments has risen in some areas in recent years, falls in other areas have not always been predicted early enough. Governors refer to this 'jack-in-the-box' effect. Leaders and governors are working together to tighten the evaluation of how well the school is doing. However, once a priority for improvement is identified, it is tackled well. There are advanced plans for the school to formalise a federation with another local school. These have been very carefully considered and well communicated within the community. Senior and middle leaders provide a good team to maintain the drive for further improvement through any organisational change.

The school is an orderly community where pupils behave well and look after each other. Teachers build pupils' confidence through praise and encouragement and this

ensures a good atmosphere for learning, with pupils feeling positive and keen to do well. From very low starting points when the youngest pupils join the school, teachers plan a good range of activities that enrich language and provide shared experiences for pupils to talk with confidence, and to broaden their vocabulary. Teachers plan work at the right level for different pupils in their class and ensure that pupils know how to find the support they need if they are uncertain. This encourages pupils to think, to work together and to apply their skills and knowledge. It has contributed to a community where pupils both value and respect each other, and take pride in each other's achievements. Parents, staff and governors have confidence in both you and in the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements are thorough, with rigorous vetting of new staff and extra checks implemented for those employed from outside the UK. Governors regularly monitor the school's detailed records and procedures. All staff have had appropriate and recent training and maintain a good awareness of safeguarding through weekly reminders, quizzes and updates at staff meetings. Senior leaders manage referrals well. They work together effectively to manage caseloads, coordinate information, and to chase up external agencies when responses to referrals are slow. Between them, leaders keep a close watch over pupils when there is a concern and maintain regular contact with external agencies to coordinate their support. You have carefully considered the risks of sharing the building and outdoor space with another school and have good arrangements in place to avoid visitors to the partner school coming into contact with your pupils.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and to minimise risks. They have a good awareness of e-safety when using computers and know how to react and report if they experience cyber bullying. Older pupils confidently rehearse a simple but effective phrase to remind themselves of the procedure to follow if they feel threatened or bullied online. Behaviour is good and pupils play safely. They respect the diversity of their community and look out for each other. They do not tolerate name-calling based on faith or difference. They know whom to tell if they are concerned about a friend or by the way in which other pupils approach or talk to them. They are confident that their concerns would be taken seriously. All this contributes to an effective culture of safeguarding where pupils are safe and staff are vigilant.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first focus for the inspection was to review how leaders are ensuring that pupils read confidently with greater breadth and depth to support good progress and high achievement. In 2016 reading assessments, although pupils in Years 1 and 2 had good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent), progress in reading was significantly below average by the end of Year 6.
- Improving reading is a high priority for the school, and both governors and leaders have come together to bring about the change needed. Leaders have worked with other schools and the local authority to introduce a creative plan to

accelerate progress in reading. Governors have committed money to help match that provided by the local authority to implement the plan and they carefully check the progress that pupils make. This is working well, with leaders supporting alongside teachers and providing training on teaching reading comprehension. Regular checks on pupils' progress show that rapid improvement is happening. Many older pupils are now reading confidently and with greater depth and understanding. Although you have introduced e-readers to motivate and encourage pupils to read at home, outside reading lessons, older pupils are not yet avid and regular readers. They lack confidence in how to use the library coding system to find information they need, and some have a limited interest in reading for pleasure. 'Reading champions' have recently been appointed to promote reading across classes but these have yet to establish a culture where pupils actively read for pleasure and enjoyment.

- Another focus was to understand how governors and leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils, particularly middle attainers, receive the support needed to achieve as well as other pupils in literacy and mathematics. In 2016, progress made by this group of pupils in Year 2 assessments was lower in mathematics than in reading and writing. It was significantly below average for disadvantaged middle-attaining pupils in at least one subject by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders have implemented a broad range of well-targeted interventions for those disadvantaged pupils who need additional help and support in mathematics and in writing. The leader responsible for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities guides and supports teachers in planning work to ensure that they make good progress in lessons. Learning mentor support gives extra help to disadvantaged pupils who have not made sufficient progress in the past. Consequently, they are catching up and their achievement is not significantly different to that of other groups of pupils. However, while you have implemented a broad range of projects and actions, the impact of individual initiatives has not been rigorously evaluated to understand which are having the greatest impact and which duplicate effort. You therefore do not have the information needed to help make future decisions on how best to use the funding you have.
- An additional focus for the inspection was to look at how middle leaders ensure that high-quality teaching is consistent across the curriculum and all classes. The previous inspection reported some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and there have been some significant changes in staffing since that time.
- Teaching was good at the time of the last inspection and this is still the case. Middle leaders have successfully introduced an effective system of working in teams to share ideas and for teachers to learn from each other. This is working well and provides valuable opportunities to model good teaching and to make sure that pupils are consistently challenged. Across the school, leaders use assessment well to discuss the achievement of individual pupils with their teachers and to work together to plan teaching which ensures that all pupils make good progress and that gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils are narrowed. This is working well to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching and to ensure that new teachers who join the school are fully supported.

- A final focus of the inspection was to review how effective leaders are in improving attendance and reducing persistent absence among those pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities. Whereas the school has made good progress in improving pupil attendance generally, persistent absence among pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was still very high in 2016.
- There has been a concerted effort to reduce persistent absence and involve different agencies to help families overcome some of the factors that contribute to this. Some pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have medical needs that can affect their attendance. However, the school's attendance officer and special educational needs coordinator liaise well with external agencies to make sure that these pupils have the appropriate support. Leaders are 'on the case' with those known to be poor attenders and are notified immediately when they do not arrive in school. They take action quickly and make contact with the family or the appropriate agencies involved. The combination of good communication, early action and use of external support has successfully halved the number of persistent absentees this year. Attendance remains in line with the national average for all schools.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- Pupils' reading skills are broadened and applied beyond their reading lessons and that a culture of reading for pleasure and enjoyment is developed across the school
- the evaluation of actions and initiatives is comprehensive and used to both identify developing concerns, intervene early, and to inform future planning so that resources are deployed to maximum impact.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Wagstaff  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I had discussions with senior leaders and governors about actions they had put in place to improve the school and how they knew that these actions had been successful. Several leaders and staff were interviewed about safeguarding and also about support for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special

educational needs and/or disabilities. 'Learning walks' took place with the headteacher and senior staff, including observing some lessons in the early years and Years 2, 4, 5 and 6. Samples of pupils' work were reviewed and I spoke with a group of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and listened to them read. I analysed a range of school documents linked to the school self-evaluation and improvement priorities. I met with members of the governing body and also a representative from the local authority. The 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were reviewed, as were the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.