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5 July 2017

Mrs Bernadette Lloyd  
Harefield Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Lloyd

### **Short inspection of Harefield Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 December 2012.

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

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

The school continues to improve under your leadership and the leadership of the head of school. You, the head of school, middle leaders and governors work effectively as a team to ensure that pupils achieve well. In your role as the executive headteacher of Harefield Infant School and Harefield Junior School, you ensure that effective practice is shared to improve teaching. You also ensure that there is smooth transition for pupils when they join the junior school at the end of Year 2. For example, pupils in Year 5 read with Year 2 pupils to help improve their reading skills. The local authority thinks highly of you, acknowledging the work you do to support training programmes on improving leadership in other schools. The local authority is also complimentary about the work your leaders do with other schools on moderating pupils' work to ensure that assessment procedures are accurate.

Leaders work closely with the children's centre on the school's site, providing training for parents on literacy and mathematics to support their children's learning. This also ensures the effective transition of children who attend the children's centre into your Nursery provision.

You provide strong and passionate leadership. Governors share your ambition, providing leaders with effective support and challenge to ensure continuous improvement. You know your parents well and have built a strong sense of

community. The school has achieved several national awards, including for the work you do to ensure that your most-able pupils achieve well and your work with families to overcome any barriers to learning. Parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, were overwhelmingly supportive of the school's leadership. They used words such as 'fantastic' and 'amazing' to describe the school.

You have been relentless in your approach to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and provide your staff with effective training and support to improve. You have established a stable team of staff and their morale is high. You have rightly identified that improving the attainment and progress of pupils in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is a school priority.

At the time of the previous inspection, the outside learning area for children in the early years was highlighted as an area where the school needed to improve. Since that time, you and your leadership team have been effective in improving the outside area. It is well equipped and supports all areas of children's learning. It is a fun place for children to learn. Under your leadership, a successful 'Forest School' has been created as an extension to the outdoor learning area. Children love the Forest School, where they have plenty of opportunities to explore their surroundings, be imaginative and extend their understanding of the world.

The other area for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection was to do with developing the skills of boys in writing. At the end of Year 2 in 2016, the overall standards in writing were higher than found nationally. A higher proportion of boys achieved the expected standard in writing compared with boys nationally. Leaders are predicting standards to rise in writing overall this year. However, you acknowledge that writing can be improved further, particularly for some of the lower-attaining boys.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of vigilance to ensure that safeguarding is effective. All the vetting checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers are carried out rigorously. Safeguarding is central to the work of the governing body and governors regularly check the school's work to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Staff, including governors, receive regular and relevant training about safeguarding and child protection procedures. Staff know how to respond to concerns about a child's safety and welfare. You use the school's website well to inform and signpost parents to other websites that they can access to keep their children safe, including when online at home. Pupils told me that they 'always feel safe at school'. Pupils said that staff keep them safe and they are taught to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are kept safe.

You work extremely well with external agencies and vulnerable families to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils. You ensure that records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders make referrals to external agencies quickly and effectively.

## **Inspection findings**

- The first focus for this inspection was how effectively leaders are diminishing the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally in reading, writing, phonics and early years. At the end of 2016, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as other pupils nationally in reading and writing in key stage 1. When compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was lower in the Year 1 phonics screening check and for the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the early years.
- Leaders ensure that the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, is monitored frequently. Teachers know their pupils well and support their learning effectively. Leaders have been effective in targeting disadvantaged pupils and providing them with individual and small group support to ensure that they achieve well. The schools' current information and work in pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in reading, writing, phonics and in the early years. The governing body ensures that pupil premium funding is used well.
- The second focus of this inspection was on boys' writing. Boys' writing is improving. The school's current assessment information and work in pupils' books show that boys are making good progress. The Forest School, for example, enthuses boys to write about scientific investigations and brings their writing alive.
- In the early years, the woodwork benches encourage boys to make shapes and objects out of wood. This motivates them to write about what they have made. Although boys' writing is improving, it is not improving rapidly for some of the lower-attaining boys when compared with their classmates. Pupils' books show that sometimes they do not write at length to practise and improve their writing skills.
- The third focus of this inspection was on how effectively leaders have improved the quality of teaching in phonics. In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- There is ongoing and increasingly effective training for staff. Pupils who are not making the progress they should in phonics are quickly identified for individual support. Some strong teaching of phonics was observed during the inspection; pupils used their understanding of letter sounds in their reading and writing.
- Pupils who were listened to reading demonstrated their knowledge of phonics when reading difficult or unfamiliar words. However, you acknowledge that the teaching of phonics needs to be consistently strong to ensure that pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

- My final line of enquiry focused on attendance. This was because it has been below the national average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have worked effectively to improve attendance, particularly through working with parents. As a result, attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. However, although attendance has improved for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below average. You have targeted this as an area for improvement so that disadvantaged pupils can make consistently strong progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils, particularly lower-attaining boys, improve their writing skills
- the quality of teaching in phonics is consistently strong so that a greater proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves quickly towards the national average.

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

Avtar Sherri  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

- I met the executive headteacher, the head of school, middle leaders, the chair of the governing body and four other governors. I met with a local authority representative and the school's improvement partner. I also met a group of pupils from key stage 1.
- I observed learning in key stages 1 and 2 and in early years with leaders, looking at pupils' books. I spoke with pupils and heard them read.
- I looked at the schools' information on attendance, safeguarding and recruitment procedures. I also reviewed pupils' progress information.
- I took into account the views of 33 responses to Parent View. There were no responses to the staff survey or the pupil survey.