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Miss Rebecca Campbell  
Headteacher  
Holmer Green Junior School  
The Common  
Holmer Green  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP15 6TD

Dear Miss Campbell

### **Short inspection of Holmer Green Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 September 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 September 2012.

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

With your leadership team, you have maintained and built on the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Governors and staff share your ambition for the achievement and well-being of every pupil. Your commitment to providing pupils with a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum results in an excitement about learning that runs through the school. You have established clear values and expectations that pupils understand and willingly follow, so that they always try their hardest in lessons. Pupils behave impeccably. They are kind and considerate to each other and talk about their school with pride.

Parents recognise and appreciate all that the school does for their children. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were highly complimentary about the impact of your leadership and the commitment of your staff. One wrote, 'I think the headteacher is exceptional in her leadership.' Another parent commented, 'This is a lovely junior school and I would highly recommend it.' Many parents reserved particular praise for the range and variety of extra-curricular activities the school provides.

You have taken great care to ensure that all staff are well supported in their work. They feel that their efforts are valued and they are grateful for the career development opportunities that you make available to them. All those members of staff who responded to the staff survey recognised that you have regard for their workload when planning future initiatives.

At the last inspection, the lead inspector praised the effective teaching and leadership seen in the school, the positive relationships and the strong progress made by pupils. These features are still notable strengths of the school. In the same inspection, it was recommended that leaders take steps to improve the presentation of pupils' writing, and to ensure that low-prior-attaining pupils were given work to do that was both challenging and achievable. The lead inspector also judged that subject leaders should be given a greater role in driving the school's improvement. You have taken effective action to address all of these recommendations. Pupils now take great care over the presentation of their work because teachers have made handwriting a priority. In addition, teachers make sure that work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. As a result, most pupils make strong progress and enjoy their learning, including pupils with low prior attainment, or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

You, your governing body and leadership team are not complacent, however. You have rightly identified pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly girls' progress, as a priority. Your target is that by the end of key stage 2, pupils' outcomes in mathematics should be above the national average.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders carry out rigorous checks on the suitability of all those who work or volunteer in the school. In addition, staff and governors receive regular training in keeping pupils safe, including from radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. Staff are always vigilant and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Records are detailed and of high quality. You are tenacious in ensuring that vulnerable pupils and their families receive timely and effective support from outside agencies.

Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, be that in crossing the road, responding to an emergency in school or using the internet. Pupils also say that bullying is very rare, and that when it does happen, teachers deal with it promptly and effectively. Pupils like and respect their teachers. Pupils are considerate to each other in class and play together harmoniously in the playground. Trained 'kindness ambassadors' ensure that any pupil who is on their own is befriended.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look in particular at the following aspects of the school's work:
  - the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
  - how well leaders have addressed the recommendation in the previous inspection report to improve the quality of subject leadership
  - how well the curriculum meets pupils' needs and prepares them for their next

steps

- how well pupils, and in particular girls, are doing in mathematics
  - how effectively governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- Since the previous inspection, you have rightly invested in the development of your subject leaders, who carry out their responsibilities with vision and energy. They make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and on how well pupils are doing. Subject leaders ensure that teachers get good advice on how to improve their practice and that pupils get any additional help they need. For example, the special educational needs coordinator sees to it that teaching assistants are deployed effectively. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who need to catch up, are making strong progress in a range of subjects. Leaders keep up to date with the latest developments and research findings in their subject areas, and provide teachers with expert support and challenge. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge and use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding have improved.
- Pupils benefit from an engaging, well-rounded curriculum and are prepared well for their next steps in education. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their learning. They relish the challenge of choosing harder tasks and they thrive because of the encouragement their teachers give them. In science, pupils enjoy devising and carrying out their own experiments. In technology, pupils design and make exciting products, using a variety of skills, equipment and materials. Pupils talk animatedly about the many after-school clubs and educational visits available to them.
- Physical education (PE) is a particular strength of the curriculum. Your use of the PE and sport premium funding has been carefully planned to increase pupils' participation in sport as well as to improve teachers' skills in delivering PE. You have established an active sports partnership with other schools in the locality, which gives pupils access to an even wider range of sports and games. However, you are not complacent about the curriculum. You plan to make use of the PE and sport premium to extend further the range of outdoor learning opportunities, and to enhance the provision for dance.
- Published outcomes for 2016 show that pupils made progress in reading that was above the national average, while in mathematics pupils' progress was in line with their peers nationally. Your analysis of mathematics outcomes rightly showed that middle-prior-attaining girls made less progress than other groups of pupils. To address this, you made carefully considered changes to the mathematics curriculum, introducing a sharper focus on basic skills and problem-solving. You invested wisely in training for teachers and new resources. As a result, assessment information shows that all pupils currently in the school, including girls, are now making much stronger progress in mathematics than in previous years.
- Governors are exceptionally diligent in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities, including for safeguarding. Pupils are safe and free from harm because governors have established robust policies and rigorous systems. They check regularly that leaders and staff follow these policies. Governors oversee the school's finances

effectively. They challenge leaders to ensure that additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have the desired impact on outcomes. Governors check what leaders tell them by visiting the school to see pupils and teachers at work. Governors provide robust challenge to leaders and managers, and at the same time have established warm and trusting relations with them. Under the clear-sighted leadership of the experienced chair, governors have put in place a five-year strategic plan, designed to focus leaders' efforts and the school's resources on a small number of key priorities.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 match the above-average outcomes they achieve in reading.

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

Yours sincerely

Gary Holden  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, you and I carried out visits to all classes in Years 3 to 5. I also held meetings with you and with members of your leadership team to discuss pupils' progress, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. I had a meeting with the curriculum leader and a group of subject leaders. I met with two members of the governing body and spoke to the chair of the governing body on the telephone. I reviewed a range of documentation, including your school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. I also reviewed policies and procedures for safeguarding. I met with a group of pupils, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground. I took account of 43 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 40 free-text responses. I also considered 18 responses to the staff survey and 81 responses to the pupil survey.