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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Yvonne Baron
Headteacher
Etz Chaim Jewish Primary School
20 Daws Lane
London
NW7 4SL

Dear Mrs Baron

Short inspection of Etz Chaim Jewish Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 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 2013.

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 has continued to grow in size and now has pupils from Nursery to Year 6. You have successfully steered the school through this period of expansion and the move from the temporary school building into the current school premises. You have worked closely with other senior leaders and governors to identify the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. You evaluate the school's work accurately and have put in place effective strategies to drive improvements. Your senior leaders visit classes regularly and check the quality of pupils' work in books to make sure that pupils are making strong progress.

At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors found that pupils' handwriting was not as good as it should be. You have introduced a range of successful initiatives to improve handwriting. Key stages 1 and 2 pupils attend additional sessions before school to help them with their handwriting. Pen licences and special certificates motivate pupils to write neatly and with careful letter formation. As a result, work in pupils' books shows that pupils typically present their work neatly and use fluent handwriting in most classes.

In your new building, the indoor and outdoor environment strongly promotes children's learning. Staff plan exciting and interesting activities for the pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. In the early years, children learned about a Jewish festival through painting patterns and symbols.

Pupils typically have strong social skills. They are well behaved, friendly and polite. You place a lot of importance on pupils from a young age developing independent learning skills. Pupils work cooperatively together and talk enthusiastically about their learning. For example, I observed Year 5 pupils thinking hard while they discussed how to solve a problem in mathematics.

You have made sure that pupils are happy and feel safe at school. In Ofsted's online questionnaire the overwhelming majority of parents and carers were confident that their children are happy and safe at Etz Chaim Jewish Primary School. The school is calm and orderly. Staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for developing the school. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about how their teachers listen to their ideas. You have set up meetings where older pupils lead younger pupils in discussions about how to improve the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained, and you update them regularly with the most recent safeguarding advice. When staff join the school, they receive additional training. Staff understand what action to take should they have any concerns about the safety of any pupils. You have ensured that all staff are vigilant about the safety of pupils. The school has effective partnerships with outside agencies and any referrals are followed up appropriately. Governors are also well informed about current safeguarding practice.

Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. For example, pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using information and communication technology. Pupils know how to cross the road safely following class visits to practise this during road safety week. Children in Nursery and Reception classes learn how to cross the road using the zebra crossing outside school with staff and then practise crossing pretend zebra crossings in school.

Inspection findings

- This is the first year that you have pupils in all years, including in Year 6. Governors and leaders are ambitious for pupils to achieve well by the end of key stage 2. You monitor pupils' progress carefully. Governors also visit the school regularly and check how well pupils learn. You want your pupils to be well equipped for the next stage in their education when they move on to secondary school.
- Your assessment information and work in pupils' books shows that pupils typically make strong progress.
- You have rightly identified the progress of the most able pupils in Years 1 to 6 as a priority for improvement. The inspection considered how well the most able pupils learn and make progress. You have made sure that staff benefit from well-selected training that helps them to set pupils suitably difficult

tasks. As a result, staff plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities.

- Work in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils make strong progress over time. The most able pupils are challenged to think hard. For example, in one class, pupils solved open ended mathematical problems by choosing the strategy that would be the most efficient. Their teacher asked them to explain their reasoning and they were able to do so with clarity and confidence. Pupils told me that their work had the correct amount of challenge and that they enjoy extending themselves further by working with decimal values. In another class, pupils wrote extended pieces of descriptive writing. However, in a few classes, work is not as demanding when teachers' expectations are not routinely high.
- We agreed that we would next explore the progress children make in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly the most able children. This was because the previous inspection found that the most able children in the early years did not make strong progress, particularly in mathematics.
- During my visits to the early years, I observed how much children enjoy their learning and the engaging activities that adults plan for them. Adults encouraged children to use their knowledge of letter sounds to write about themselves. Some children wrote stories using simple words and sentences.
- Children develop their skills well in the inside and outside learning areas. You have focused on providing activities that promote children's physical development. This is because you identified that children's physical skills are generally weaker than other aspects of their development when they start the early years.
- You recently bought high-quality equipment to improve the outdoor learning area. During the inspection, I observed how confidently children ride tricycles around obstacle courses in the outside space. They jumped across tyres enthusiastically showing their good skills of balance and coordination. In the Nursery class, children were using feathers to write numbers to 10 carefully while learning to control their hand movements. The impact of this can be seen in the way children are beginning to form letters.
- You have raised teachers' expectations of children's achievement in mathematics, including for the most able children. Children in Reception independently count numbers up to 100. They know which number follows another number. Staff take every opportunity to move children on in their learning. Children's workbooks show how securely children develop their early literacy and mathematics skills. However, occasionally, the most able children are not set sufficiently demanding tasks to help them to deepen their learning and to achieve their best.
- Children develop their social skills well through learning and playing together cooperatively. We saw how children discuss what they are learning and share resources readily. Activities are still fun but now have a clear purpose for learning. We observed children making dinosaurs using cardboard boxes. They practised cutting neatly and used scissors sensibly. They told me about the dinosaur books that they have enjoyed reading and wrote labels for their

dinosaur models. As a result of the improvements that you have made since the last inspection, more children than nationally achieve the average standard at the end of the Reception Year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able are routinely challenged in the early years and Years 1 to 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Hayward
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and the assistant headteacher. I met three governors, including the chair. I visited classes from Nursery to Year 6 to observe learning and to look at pupils' work. I spoke to pupils informally at breaktime. I spoke to members of staff around the school. I looked at documentation about pupils' learning and progress. I looked at records and documentation relating to safeguarding. I looked at the school website and documentation available to parents. I considered 12 comments received by letter and telephone from parents as well as 151 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View.