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Mr Simon Ward
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Ward

Short inspection of Barnes Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 11 January 2018, 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 May 2014.

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 steered the school through challenging circumstances created by changes in governorship and staffing, not taking your eye off the ball in continually making improvements to pupils' learning. There is a tangible drive and sense of urgency to provide high-quality learning opportunities which allow pupils to thrive. Leadership is the responsibility of all staff, and you have created a skilful and highly effective school team in which morale is high.

Improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are accelerating quickly the rates of progress of current pupils across the school. The whole school team has diligently addressed issues raised at the last inspection, although pupils still need to make more progress in mathematics. Pupils' reading skills have improved significantly, as has the quality of teaching in the school.

Teachers routinely establish high expectations. They accept no excuses for failure and they work collaboratively to address issues that arise. You, governors and other school leaders keep a close eye on the quality of teaching, undertaking monitoring of teaching in lessons and analysing work in pupils' books. You acknowledge that pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics have not been as strong as those found in writing and especially in reading. You have made mathematics a key priority and already there are substantial improvements in pupils' achievement in most year groups. Similarly, you acknowledge that differences remain between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils nationally who

have similar starting points. You have well-thought-through plans to continue to support disadvantaged pupils across the school, which are already having a positive impact, and you are refining systems to monitor the impact of these initiatives.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff and this is seen in their excellent attitudes to learning in lessons. Pupils develop good citizenship skills, being keen to take on responsibilities through roles such as being a member of the school council, taking on a monitor's role in each class, volunteering to be an anti-bullying ambassador or working as a young leader at breaktimes. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school is mostly of a high standard.

You have worked hard to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of your pupils and fires their interest through visits to important sites across the region linked to their topic work. For example, areas of study have resulted in visitors to school such as from the University of Durham, and visits to Sunderland Winter Gardens and Woodhorn Colliery, Ashington. Pupils are also gaining an appreciation of multicultural Britain and a deeper understanding of the wider world beyond their immediate locality, as well as of British values such as democracy and tolerance. You acknowledge that further work is needed to allow subject leaders to fully monitor their areas of responsibility and develop systems to assess and track pupils' progress in subjects other than in English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and all leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff, who ensure no stone is left unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe. The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring, putting the welfare and well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. This is clearly seen in the friendly and confident manner of the pupils in school who report feeling very safe at all times. They have full trust in the adults who look after them and are proud to have special anti-bullying ambassadors on duty every day. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety, including keeping themselves safe online.

Policies, procedures and records are of an extremely high quality, enhanced by the meticulous and detailed records on the school's online system. Staff training is thorough and up to date, including training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the risk of extremism and online dangers. Registers of staff training are completed diligently, showing all employed staff's training is up to date. Staff have access to well-written policies and guidance and, as a result, have a very secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection findings

- Based on detailed and accurate tracking systems, it is clear that current pupils are making very strong progress in their learning in every year group in reading, writing, and, now, in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in all subjects is in line with that found nationally. The most able pupils also make strong progress in their learning so

that the proportion who are working at a greater depth exceeds that found nationally in reading, and is in line with national figures in mathematics and writing. Work seen in pupils' books in visits to classes during the inspection was of good quality. You acknowledge that a small gap still exists between achievement in mathematics and that in reading and writing, but that this is closing quickly.

- Teaching is mostly of a consistently good quality across the school, including in mathematics, and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Staff are skilled at supporting, prompting and challenging pupils to produce their very best work. Teachers are increasingly adept in the promotion of reasoning in mathematical problem-solving, such as seen in a Year 5 lesson when pupils were challenged to draw a compound shape with an area of 16cm squared. Pupils in Year 6 discussed different strategies to find multiples of 13 based on existing known facts.
- You have ensured that the school continues to work tirelessly to ensure all pupils are safe and well cared for. The strong relationships in school and high levels of trust between adults and pupils ensure that pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is excellent. Pupils are polite, caring, considerate and friendly to each other and to visitors. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together and games are sometimes led by 'young leaders'. Safeguarding is highly effective and the school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is excellent.
- Staff and leaders at all levels share the same ambition to eradicate underperformance. They work tirelessly to solve problems and make continuous improvements, with teamwork being the catalyst for change. Morale within the school community is buoyant. You have ensured that pupils have access to a curriculum that sparks their imagination and fires their interest in learning. Imaginative use is made of places of significant interest in the local community, many of which have not been previously visited by pupils in school.
- You have ensured that pupil premium spending is managed effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. This support is regularly evaluated by the assistant headteacher for its impact on pupils' learning, and amended or changed as a result. The positive impact of this support is seen through the improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school, especially in Year 6. However, differences still exist between their achievement and the achievement of other pupils nationally with the same starting points. The school acknowledges that further work is required to accelerate the progress of this group of pupils, including refining systems to more closely analyse the impact of all aspects of the support provided.
- You have ensured that the school is committed to ensuring that all pupils have the highest rates of attendance possible. To this end, valuable work is undertaken by the attendance officer. Pupils understand that missing school unnecessarily could have a detrimental effect on their learning. Pupils' rates of attendance have risen and now match those found nationally. The persistent absence of a number of disadvantaged pupils is declining as their rates of attendance improve, but more work is required to ensure that their attendance

matches that of other pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- differences between the standards of attainment and the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils who have the same starting points continue to diminish
- pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics continue to improve so that they are as good as those in reading and writing
- subject leaders become skilled in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility, including developing systems to assess and track the progress of pupils' skills in different subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Phil Scott
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. You and I visited lessons in each year group, and I observed pupils' behaviour during break. I met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors. I spoke to pupils about their work and their views of the school. I looked in workbooks with you and the deputy headteacher and also when in lessons. A range of documents was considered relating to safeguarding and external evaluations of the school. I examined the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, the school's monitoring of its own performance and its assessment and tracking of current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' recent achievement in the 2017 statutory assessments, responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and the school's website.