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Mr Bernard Skirton
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Dear Mr Skirton

Short inspection of Southwark Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2018 with Sharon Bray, Ofsted Inspector, 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 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 maintained the strengths apparent at the last inspection and dealt effectively with the areas for improvement. Your approach to making improvements has been systematic, sustained and successful.

You, the senior leaders and the governing body communicate convincingly a sense of ambition and high expectations for the school, its pupils and its role within the local community. Along with the subject and other leaders, you show energy and determination to improve, tempered with well-judged self-evaluation and a focus on making practical changes.

You have developed the school's approach to teaching mathematics in response to the areas of improvement from the inspection and to your own analyses of the outcomes for the pupils. The pupils are now routinely using mathematics-specific vocabulary accurately and confidently, from the Reception Year onwards. You have placed much more emphasis on developing the pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics, in order to help more of the pupils to reach the high standard than has been the case previously.

The pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. As a result, they concentrate well, typically behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. For example, they spoke with the inspectors enthusiastically about the work to develop their reasoning skills. They become confident and are fully prepared to explain their answers to questions,

often in detail.

The teachers phrase their questions for the pupils well, taking account of the different abilities. They identify and correct the pupils' misconceptions. They help the pupils to understand any mistakes that they have made. As a result, the pupils make good progress. The level of challenge for the most able pupils is not consistently high enough for enough of them to reach the standards of which they are capable.

The pupils make particularly good progress in writing. The teachers assess the pupils' work accurately. The pupils' progress is monitored carefully. The teachers act on what they find out about the pupils' learning. The leaders have identified the aspects of learning that are inhibiting the most able pupils particularly from reaching the high standard in writing. That is done less effectively for the pupils who struggle with writing than for the other groups of pupils.

The teachers ensure that there is a clear focus on developing the pupils' grammar. The pupils are given plentiful opportunities to write in different subjects. That enables the pupils to rehearse and to extend their learning of grammar. The pupils understand the things that they have to learn and which they have to improve and are able to act on those things.

The subject leaders make a good contribution to improving the teaching in their areas of responsibility. They are knowledgeable, pick out appropriate things to be improved, based on careful monitoring of what is going on and how well the pupils are doing. The actions that they take lead to improvements, as they have, for example, in the teaching of mathematics.

The school's work to promote regular attendance has a good impact on pupils' attitudes. The pupils speak positively about the range of rewards for good attendance and for making a good improvement in attendance. You have brought about some marked improvements in the attendance of the pupils who are absent too often. These are often complex and difficult cases. Despite the very noteworthy improvements, a few of these pupils are still absent too often and this has had a marked impact on the overall levels of persistent absence at the school recently.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The school's approach to safeguarding is thoroughgoing and well managed. You have developed a school-wide network of systems and staffing that enables information to flow quickly and easily. Consequently, even seemingly minor concerns are identified and acted upon quickly.

The staff understand their responsibilities well and are alert to a wide range of potential indications that a pupil may be experiencing difficulty. As a result, the pupils feel safe at the school.

You have put in place strong and effective links to coordinate the work to deal with persistent absence and the work to safeguard the pupils. You work well with the families and the pupils concerned and coordinate your efforts with the work of external agencies. You utilise the full range of options available to you for dealing with persistent absence. You follow up absences in order to establish the whereabouts of the pupils. You use the local authority's protocols for children who may be missing from education, when necessary.

Inspection findings

- You begin developing the children's mathematical reasoning skills in the Reception Year. For example, an inspector observed the children working out different ways to make up the number 12.
- The teachers demonstrate for the pupils ways for them to explain their understanding of mathematics. Routinely, they expect the pupils to explain the ways in which they have done things.
- The teachers find successful ways to help the children in the Reception Year and the pupils in the main school to apply the mathematical principles they learn. This helps to develop the pupils' mathematics reasoning skills.
- The teachers use a range of stimulating methods that help the pupils to be interested in writing and so to develop their skills. For example, work on a simulated crime scene investigation helped Year 6 pupils to visualise the things that they were expected to write about.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the high standard in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is below average, including for the most able pupils. The teachers do not insist on routinely high standards for the presentation of the pupils' mathematics work.
- The school provides a wide range of helpful support for disadvantaged pupils.
- The teachers do not identify precisely enough the things that are holding back the pupils who struggle with writing.
- The teachers correct the pupils' written mistakes in grammar well. They do not routinely reinforce good grammar and the requirements of formal language sufficiently when responding to the pupils' verbal answers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in mathematics,
 - the pupils routinely present their work to a high standard
 - the level of challenge for the most able pupils is consistently high.
- in writing,

- the particular needs of pupils who find writing difficult are identified precisely and the teaching is adapted for them accordingly
- the teachers promote the use of good grammar when the pupils respond verbally as carefully as they do with the pupils' writing.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner, and the director of children's services for Nottingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the inspectors held meetings with you, other senior staff at the school, the mathematics leader, the English leader, the designated leaders for safeguarding, and the member of staff responsible for attendance. I met with members of the governing body and discussed the work of the school with representatives of the multi-academy trust. The inspectors made a series of visits to lessons, accompanied for some by a representative of the multi-academy trust. We discussed the work of the school with pupils during lessons and on other occasions. We looked at examples of the pupils' work during lessons and reviewed examples of their workbooks. I looked at the views of parents and carers expressed using the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, and at the results of the inspection surveys for the pupils and the staff. We scrutinised various documents, including safeguarding records, a range of policy documents, a self-evaluation report and improvement plans, the latest attendance figures for the school, and your records of checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.