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22 May 2018

Mrs Patricia Flinn  
Headteacher  
Moss Hall Junior School  
187 Nether Street  
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London  
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Dear Mrs Flinn

### **Short inspection of Moss Hall Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 18 April 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 June 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement, which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection.

**There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You have steered the school successfully through a period of staffing instability and have recently appointed new senior leaders to complement your team. Together, you have identified clear priorities for school improvement and have the full support of governors to make the necessary changes. You have instigated a number of whole-school initiatives to ensure greater consistency, particularly around the quality of teaching. However, you accept that your improvement plans could be more strategic and the pace of change quicker, to ensure that current pupils make at least good progress from their different starting points.

You are rightly proud that Moss Hall Junior School admits children from a range of backgrounds, cultures and abilities. Some arrive with highly complex needs and require bespoke support. Others are at the very early stages of learning English. All are welcome. Pupils are encouraged to play together and respect each other's diverse experiences and attributes. The elected house captains enthusiastically organise activities and charitable events. Extra-curricular activities such as sport, visits and trips are plentiful, and you are particularly proud of pupils' enthusiasm for music, through activities such as the school orchestra and choir. As one parent said: 'Singing and music lessons have left a life-long imprint on both my children.' Your school site offers ample space for play and relaxation, including a pool for pupils to learn how to swim, and outdoor sports areas.

Governors share your ambition for the school. They are experienced, committed and possess a range of relevant professional skills. Governors are clear about their statutory responsibility to safeguard pupils. Like you, they share the highest ambitions for the quality of education they would like to provide for pupils and their families.

You have effectively tackled the areas for development identified at the previous inspection. For instance, you have implemented a system for teachers to give relevant feedback and check that pupils are routinely responding to it. However, you and the governors acknowledge that more work needs to be done to reassure parents and carers that you want them to be actively involved in their children's learning. During the inspection, a large proportion of parents and carers commented that they would like better communication so that they could work closer with school leaders and staff to support their children's development.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff are appropriately vigilant about keeping pupils safe. Staff training is up to date and ensures that everyone is aware of the risks posed by the wider community, including knife crime, female genital mutilation, bullying and the potential for pupils to be radicalised. You have instigated a computerised system for collecting concerns from staff about pupils' well-being. This ensures that you are able to collate relevant information in a timely way and instigate appropriate help and support quickly. Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in line with statutory guidelines.

Pupils are clear about different forms of bullying, and say they know who to talk to, should they have any concerns. They are given relevant information on how they can stay safe in school and in the wider community. They enjoy coming to school and support each other well.

### **Inspection findings**

- The majority of pupils arrive in Year 3 with average or above-average attainment. Many go on to achieve higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. However, the progress pupils make from their different starting points is, at best, average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve less well than pupils do nationally and their peers, because they make poor progress from their starting points. You accept that this trend has continued for a number of years.
- You and your new school leaders are now prioritising actions to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their starting points or barriers to their learning, are able to make at least good progress. Your revised pupil premium strategy highlights a number of practical ways in which staff can ensure that interventions are targeted and measurable. These actions aim to support pupils' well-being and academic progress. In a similar way, you are attempting to support pupils who

speaking English as an additional language so that they can make the progress of which they are capable.

- You have recently secured some external support from a special educational needs consultant, who you anticipate will work closely with parents and carers to establish effective support for individual pupils. The consultant has already revised pupils' individual learning plans to ensure that targets reflect accurately their academic abilities and needs. You know that there is still work to be done to ensure that teaching assistants are deployed effectively so that they can complement the work of class teachers. You are committed to making improvements in this area so that pupils who have special educational needs make strong progress over time.
- You and your senior leaders are now focusing on ensuring that there is high-quality teaching across all year groups. Pupils' work looked at during the inspection shows that you have implemented a consistent way for pupils to edit and improve their own work, and to engage in written dialogue with their teachers. However, you acknowledged that the quality of this feedback does not always meet your high expectations.
- You know that approximately a third of pupils arrive in Year 3 below the expected reading level. You identify, on arrival, pupils who need further support with learning to read so that they can catch up with their peers. You have daily intervention programmes in place, which appear to engage identified pupils. However, some pupils are not supported to read independently at home. This is because the school does not routinely provide appropriate texts at the correct phonics level. This impedes pupils' ability to become confident, accurate and fluent readers.
- You have implemented a number of new initiatives to improve reading across the school, and invested heavily in new texts and resources, particularly in the library. Over time, different staff have also introduced a range of programmes, some of which have proved to be more successful than others. The result is a high number of different approaches to the teaching of reading. You accept that a whole-school reading strategy, which builds on the most successful practice, would be beneficial.
- Improving the teaching of mathematics and writing has recently become a whole-school priority, and you have appointed new leaders in these areas. You have introduced new programmes in mathematics and handwriting, and provided training for staff. You have raised expectations about the quality and quantity of pupils' writing across the school and of how pupils present their work. Early indications demonstrate that pupils are beginning to make better progress in these areas.

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

- Leaders and those responsible for governance need to increase the pace of change by sharpening their key priorities for school improvement. They should implement actions in a timely way and rigorously check the impact on pupils' progress.

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs, make good progress from their starting points, by:
  - ensuring that interventions to support pupils at the early stages of learning to read are of the highest quality and are complemented by appropriate texts for pupils to read at home
  - deploying and utilising teaching assistants effectively in the classroom, so that they support teachers to deliver consistently high quality lessons
  - ensuring that targets for pupils who have special educational needs focus on their learning, and pupils are well supported to achieve them
  - working more effectively with parents and carers so that they understand the rationale behind curriculum decisions and how they might further support their children’s progress
  - ensuring that recent developments to improve the teaching of mathematics and writing and to improve pupils’ presentation of their work are having an impact.

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

Helen Matthews  
**Her Majesty’s Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher to discuss the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans. I held meetings with five governors and with a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including referrals to external agencies and the register of safeguarding checks made on staff, prior to their appointment. I visited classrooms with the headteacher to gather evidence on pupils’ progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. I looked at a range of pupils’ work with senior leaders. I met with the mathematics lead, the English lead and the new special educational needs consultant. I spoke to staff and pupils during informal times and in classrooms. I met with a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6. I spoke to the school captains about their role in the school. I listened to pupils read. I took account of the 118 written responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, nine emails from parents and governors, the 38 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 55 responses to Ofsted’s online pupil survey. I spoke to parents at the end of the day, as they collected their children, and to parents who requested a telephone call.