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Mrs Philippa Jackson  
Co-headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Jackson

### **Short inspection of Hollymount School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 created a shared vision which all staff support. You have successfully built a skilled team of senior and middle leaders who share your ambition for the school. Your leadership style is greatly appreciated by staff, who feel supported and respected while also being challenged to be the best they can be. This in turn has promoted the positive teaching and learning culture which has underpinned pupils' strong progress and well above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

Parents typically told me how proud they are of the school and how happy their children are to attend. Pupils also spoke in glowing terms about the school, describing their teachers as kind and helpful. They feel listened to and appreciate the way in which teachers make their learning fun.

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified by the previous inspection. You have enhanced the reading and writing curriculum so that it engages and motivates both boys and girls. There has been a whole-school focus on the presentation of pupils' work and, in particular, handwriting. As a result of your high expectations, pupils take pride in their work and their handwriting is neat. You have also worked hard to enrich the curriculum, which is now well supported by trips and visitors. You were also asked to improve the outdoor learning environment for children in Nursery and Reception classes. You have done this by providing a well-resourced area which encourages children to work and play together to extend their learning. Leaders have successfully brought the key skills of reading, writing

and mathematics into the outside area. For example, an enticing mud kitchen develops children's counting skills as they follow recipes and measure ingredients. Adults support children's social and academic development well. As a result, children are confident, can make independent choices, cooperate well with each other and engage effectively in conversations with adults, who act as excellent language role models for them.

### **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 designated safeguarding lead maintains comprehensive and thorough records, including referrals made to the local authority. Staff are well trained in safeguarding matters and know how to keep pupils safe. Governors are robust in checking that safeguarding practice promotes pupils' safety. They check that recruitment procedures are robust and risk assessments are promptly conducted.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in the local community. They report that bullying is not an issue in school, but know what to do if they, or their friends, are being bullied. They feel confident to share worries or concerns with staff and feel that things are effectively followed up.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed on three key lines of enquiry. The first of these was to consider how effective leaders' actions have been in improving pupils' writing, particularly that of boys. Even though attainment in writing is high overall, boys do not make the same rapid progress as girls, and pupils' progress is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have ensured that the teaching of writing is a priority from Nursery to Year 6. The key skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling are well taught and pupils' writing books show that standards are high. The use of carefully selected reading material to support writing has improved the quality of sentence structure, organisation and vocabulary choice. Teachers provide guidance for pupils on how they might improve their work and pupils edit work in their writing books with care. They learn how to write complex and interesting sentences. They can talk about the key features of writing and can write in a range of styles. Writing for all pupils, including boys, continues to improve.
- However, the quality of writing in other subjects is not of the same high standard as in English. Pupils have fewer opportunities to edit and improve their writing across the curriculum and teachers are not consistent in insisting that pupils produce their best writing.
- Secondly, we looked at the reasons for pupils' continuing high achievement by the end of key stage 2 in mathematics and reading. I found that this success begins with strong leadership. Subject leaders have provided support and training for staff that have set high expectations. Teachers know what pupils need to be able to do to reach the higher or greater depth standard in reading, writing and

mathematics. Secure tracking systems enable teachers to provide pupils with appropriate challenge and support to make the progress of which they are capable.

- Changes to the mathematics curriculum have ensured that all pupils, including higher attaining pupils, are well motivated and challenged. Teachers model strategies clearly and allow pupils lots of opportunities to discuss and practise mathematics. Secure mental mathematics skills support pupils' learning. Pupils can apply their knowledge of number, such as multiplication tables, place value and number patterns in a range of contexts. The strong focus on developing reasoning skills helps pupils to discuss and explain their thinking. Pupils enjoy problem solving and say that they like to be challenged in mathematics lessons. They show resilience and do not give up when things are difficult. They are willing to take risks because teachers celebrate 'marvellous mistakes'.
- The way in which the school teaches reading has also changed, using whole-class guided reading sessions. Teachers model and explain what is needed to become a fluent reader. Teaching develops comprehension skills through challenging questioning; pupils are required to support and justify their answers, finding examples in the text, rather than simply offering opinions. They develop the skills of inference and deduction and insights into what the author was trying to achieve. Those who find reading difficult are well supported, so helping them to make at least the progress expected. A 'star reward' system encourages home reading. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors and appreciate the range of interesting and challenging texts available to them. They told me that they enjoy visiting the school library, which is a 'reading bus' situated in the school grounds.
- Finally, we looked at the wider curriculum to consider whether provision and outcomes are as good as in the core subjects. Curriculum information on the school's website is of a good quality for early years but lacks detail for key stages 1 and 2.
- The curriculum is broad overall and appropriate time is given to each subject. All subjects are celebrated by the bright, high-quality displays around the school. Trips and visitors are popular with pupils and enhance the curriculum.
- However, pupils' books show that, while pupils study a good range of topics, they have insufficient opportunities to study subjects in depth, particularly history, geography, art, music and design technology. Pupils' skills are not developed as well as they are in core subjects and frequently the teaching and resources put limitations on the type and depth of writing or presentation. Higher attaining pupils do not receive enough challenge across the wider curriculum. They are not required to think harder or work on more complex ideas and concepts. This results in too few opportunities to deepen their knowledge.
- In general, assessment of pupils' progress beyond English and mathematics is at an early stage of development. Assessment in science is effective in identifying gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning.
- The physical education curriculum is a particular strength. Teachers' skills have been developed by a qualified sports coach. In addition to learning how to play a

range of sports, pupils also learn about team building, leadership of others and respecting the rules of how to be 'a good sport'.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils develop subject-specific knowledge and skills in greater depth across the wider curriculum, particularly higher attaining pupils
- pupils' writing in all subjects is as strong as it is in their English books
- all pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with the co-headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. I scrutinised pupils' work in English, mathematics and a range of subjects. I visited lessons to observe learning and listen to pupils reading. I talked to pupils about their learning both at formal and informal times throughout the day. I met with parents at the start of the school day and analysed responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. I analysed responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, pupil attendance information, documentation related to safeguarding, and the school's assessment and behaviour information.