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Mrs Janice Thomas  
Executive Headteacher  
Sebright School  
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London  
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Dear Mrs Thomas

### **Short inspection of Sebright School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 July 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 November 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Strong leadership and direction have enhanced many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection. School leaders are reflective and realistic in the evaluation of the impact of their work. This enables them to identify areas of strength and to implement actions to address any remaining weaknesses.

Leaders have responded positively to the previous inspection report. You have ensured that all leaders have the expertise and capacity to work closely with teachers and further improve the quality of teaching. Leaders regularly review how well pupils learn in different subject areas. This enables them to identify the best practice in teaching and make sure this is shared across the school. As a result, pupils in all year groups achieve well.

The previous inspection report identified that teaching was not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Following the inspection, you trained teachers to improve their skills in providing work that is suitably challenging. In checking the quality of teaching, leaders consider the extent to which pupils of all abilities are

stretched in their learning from their starting points. Teachers now have very high expectations that pupils produce the best work possible. As a result, the 2017 key stage 2 tests show that the proportion of most-able pupils attaining the high standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. This was also the case for the most able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers do not challenge all of the most able pupils in key stage 1 to enable them to attain at greater depth in reading, however.

Pupils said they are happy at school. They enjoy learning. Excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They talked extensively about the 'Sebright standard', which sets out the school's expectations on how they interact with other adults and pupils. Pupils know that this applies when they are in school and beyond the school gates. Parents are complimentary about the school's work and say they appreciate the teachers' commitment. One parent, typifying the views of others, commented: 'Sebright feels like an extension to my family. Everyone knows my child and everyone listens. I feel the teachers go out of their way to ensure children are well cared for and that they are learning to their potential.'

Governors know the school well. They use their collective skills to offer timely and effective challenge to school leaders. They ensure the information they receive from school leaders is accurate by undertaking regular visits to the school, and by holding discussions with staff and pupils. When necessary, they seek and act on external advice promptly, for example from the local authority.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff and governors are well trained to help them identify pupils who may be at risk. They have a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures for reporting any concerns they may have. School leaders ensure that the checks carried out on the suitability of staff are robust. Records relating to safeguarding are up to date, detailed and fit for purpose. The safeguarding team works closely with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils and families are supported well. The school works effectively with families whose children are at risk of not attending school. Pupils' attendance rates remain above the national average.

Pupils said they feel safe at school. They spoke confidently about how they could help to keep themselves safe. They told me how they stay safe online, and they know not to give their personal details to anyone that they do not know. Pupils said that teachers remind them about internet safety at the start of every computing lesson. They told me that bullying is rare, and that adults are very quick to deal with any bullying if it occurs.

### **Inspection findings**

- In our initial discussion, we identified pupils' progress in reading and mathematics in key stage 2 as a key line of enquiry. This was because, in 2016, the progress pupils made in these subjects at the end of key stage 2 was below the national

average. You have put in place effective actions to address this so that, in 2017, the progress pupils made in these subjects was significantly above the national average. The school's assessment information and work in current Year 6 pupils' books indicate that this is likely to remain the case this year.

- Leaders reflected on the 2016 reading results, and implemented effective actions quickly. They invested in high-quality reading materials, which are now available in each class. Pupils show a genuine pleasure in reading. They talk about their book choices, typically discussing why the plot is appealing, or why they find a certain character interesting. Teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to practise and consolidate their reading skills. They identify the need for pupils to develop the more sophisticated skills of inference and deduction. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 now make strong progress in reading.
- In mathematics, school leaders identified the need to develop pupils' arithmetic and calculation skills to enable them to meet the expected standards. Across the school, teachers provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to practise these skills. Pupils are consistently encouraged to develop resilience in their mathematics learning. Consequently, pupils persevere in their learning and are able to overcome mistakes and learn from them. Pupils have a strong sense of number, and they are able to reason mathematically. Current assessment information shows that pupils across the school are making strong progress in mathematics.
- We also agreed to look at attainment and progress in reading at key stage 1. This was because, for two years, while attainment and progress of pupils in key stage 1 were similar to the national average in all subjects, disadvantaged pupils did not do well as others, nationally, in reading.
- School leaders have prioritised actions to improve pupils' achievement in reading in key stage 1. The teaching of phonics is highly effective. By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been above the national average for the past three years. When I listened to pupils read, they used their phonics knowledge confidently to read unfamiliar words. Teachers subsequently build on this knowledge to develop pupils' comprehension skills.
- During reading activities, teachers are skilful at probing pupils' understanding of text. They ensure pupils access a wide range of reading materials. Teachers encourage pupils to read more challenging texts. As a result of leaders' focus on improving reading, pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1, are making strong progress in reading. However, teachers do not routinely ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils are challenged sufficiently so that a higher proportion of them achieve the greater depth standard in reading.
- Finally, we looked at the wider curriculum to explore the extent to which it supports the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Leaders and governors understand the importance of ensuring there is rigour across all subjects, not only those assessed in national tests. Pupils achieve well within a clearly set-out curriculum. Leaders have worked hard to ensure that pupils make very strong gains in their knowledge and skills across all subjects, over time.
- Pupils achieve well in the humanities. The school's geography curriculum allows

for pupils to gain a deep understanding of both the physical and human aspects of the subject. In history, pupils make good progress in their understanding of different significant historical periods. Teachers are skilled in building on pupils' prior knowledge. In learning about Romans, for instance, teachers encouraged pupils to pose enquiry questions using what they already know about the Stone Age.

- In science, teachers are clear about what knowledge and skills pupils are expected to learn in each year group. In the early years, this includes looking at planets and their basic characteristics. Curriculum demands become suitably more complex as pupils progress through the school.
- A number of pupils I spoke to said art was their favourite subject. This reflects the many opportunities teachers provide for pupils to develop their creativity and imagination. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are skilful at testing and evaluating their own designs. Pupils make strong progress in each of the curriculum subjects, and are prepared effectively for the next stages in their learning.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching sufficiently stretches and challenges the most able disadvantaged pupils so they attain the greater depth standard in reading at key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Edison David  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection I discussed the school's work with you and members of the senior leadership team. I also considered 31 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. I analysed 31 responses to the pupil survey and 27 responses to the staff survey. I spoke to a number of pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and their views on learning and behaviour. I held discussions with a representative of the local authority. I met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. I considered documentation provided by the school, and information posted on the school's website. I looked at the single central record of staff suitability checks, and the school's analysis of pupils' attendance. Together with school leaders, I visited classes to observe learning, and I looked at samples of pupils' work across all subjects. I listened to pupils read from across the ability range.

