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18 October 2018

Mr Stephen Smith  
Headteacher  
Baden-Powell School  
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E5 8DN

Dear Mr Smith

### **Short inspection of Baden-Powell School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 October 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 February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. School leaders are ambitious in securing continuous improvement. They are accurate in identifying the areas of strength and those that need further improvement. Their action plans clearly set out the steps that they are taking to continue to improve standards. Staff work very well together as a united team, sharing good practice and learning from each other. Your partnership with parents and carers is a strength. They greatly value the good education that their children receive and the caring, nurturing approach of the staff. Typical comments from parents included: 'I am extremely impressed at how the staff and pupils interact and value each other.'

The staff team is strong and united, so morale is very high. Staff express appreciation of the support that they get from school leaders. One staff member commented: 'The school really values staff health and well-being and, as a result, has a happy workforce who are able to do their best work.' Staff at all levels have many opportunities to develop their skills through regular, personalised training and professional development.

Pupils are polite, friendly and are confident when welcoming visitors. Their behaviour in lessons supports effective learning. They work hard, and they say that they like coming to school because they enjoy learning and being with their friends. Pupils are confident and articulate when talking about their work or expressing their views and ideas. They are appreciative of the many extra-curricular opportunities which leaders provide for them.

In the previous inspection, you were asked to look at the level of challenge that pupils receive in lessons. You addressed this immediately, skilling up teachers to enable them to challenge pupils effectively. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and writing has been steadily rising since the previous inspection. However, school leaders need to ensure that, in mathematics, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are sufficiently stretched so that more of them achieve the higher standard.

Governors are effective in challenging the work of the school leaders. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths but also recognise that there is room for further improvement. They work closely alongside you and other leaders to secure the best outcomes for pupils. In deploying resources, governors make full use of the information available to them. They have, for example, allocated some of the pupil premium funding to enhance children's language development in the early years foundation stage. Such decisions are making a strong impact on progress, with the number of children achieving the good level of development in line with national averages in the last three years.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff and governors are well trained to help them identify risk to pupils. Your staff understand their responsibility to report to you immediately any concerns that they have about a pupil's safety. Records relating to safeguarding of pupils are detailed, organised, up to date and fit for purpose. You work alongside families and external agencies effectively to support pupils and families, particularly those deemed vulnerable.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are confident when saying that adults ensure that the school site is kept safe and secure. Across the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep safe, for example from cyber bullying or misuse of social media. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and that they are confident that staff would deal swiftly with any bullying that might occur. Pupils value their diversity. They also take pride in helping each other. For example, they help those who they think have no one to play with in the playground. Pupils behave exceptionally well, in and out of lessons.

### **Inspection findings**

- During our initial discussion, we agreed to look at mathematics as a key line of enquiry. This was because in 2017 the proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, meeting the expected standard in key stage 2 was lower than the national average. Provisional assessment information for 2018 shows improvement, with the proportion of pupils meeting expected standards in mathematics in line with the national average.
- In key stage 1, pupils are developing secure numeracy skills and abilities from an early age. They enjoy their mathematics lessons. They use resources effectively to practise their mathematical knowledge. They are supported effectively by teachers and additional adults to develop a strong sense of number and calculation skills.

- In key stage 2, pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to practise and consolidate their mathematical understanding. Teachers regularly encourage them to articulate their working out. Pupils do this with confidence, applying their mathematical reasoning skills competently in lessons. However, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not sufficiently stretched and challenged to reach the higher standard in mathematics.
- We also considered the wider curriculum and the extent to which it supports the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. We wanted to see whether pupils achieve in other curriculum areas as well as they do in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are improving well in most areas of the curriculum. School leaders have recently reviewed the school curriculum to ensure that it offers pupils ample opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills. In science, for instance, pupils are able to make strong progress in their study of chemistry. From testing simple substances like baking soda and water in Reception, older pupils advance to studying more complex chemical reactions. They are competent at carrying out fair tests, arriving at and recording their findings with ease.
- They make similarly strong progress in history. In this subject, pupils develop understanding of the passage of time, which progresses to a deeper understanding of different periods in history. Older pupils are effective at evaluating the cause and effect of historical events. For example, pupils in Year 6 confidently talk about recognising the factors that caused the First World War.
- School leaders recognise, however, that pupils do not make the same progress in their art, craft and design subject. Pupils do not receive enough opportunities to improve their techniques in drawing, painting and sculpture. As a result, the progress that pupils make in this area is not as strong as the other subjects.
- Finally, we looked at attendance. This was because, in 2017, pupils' absence and persistent absence rates were both above national averages. You have addressed this by carefully analysing the attendance information and working closely with families and external agencies. Consequently, attendance rates have improved over the last year. Current attendance information shows improvement year on year.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced by half between 2016 and 2017. This reflects the relentless work of the attendance team, using their extensive knowledge of pupils and their families to implement effective interventions.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are stretched and challenged enough so that a greater proportion of them achieve the higher standard in mathematics
- teachers provide pupils with opportunities to improve their art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture, using a range of materials

so that they make as strong progress as in other 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 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 work of the school with you and with members of the senior leadership team. 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 governors, including the chair of the governing body. I considered the comments submitted by parents via Parent View. I also 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.