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Mr David Tomlinson
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Tomlinson

Short inspection of Barrow Hill Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 2 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 September 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.

You, the governing body and the senior leadership team have together created a culture of continuing improvement. This is seen in pupils' very strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and across the wider curriculum. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end of key stage 2 has improved year on year since the previous inspection, and is well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.

The previous report urged the school to provide more challenge for disadvantaged pupils and for the most able. The school has been very successful in these respects. Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress and attain as highly as others in the school, and well above all pupils nationally. Similarly, the proportions of pupils achieving the high or greater-depth standards have continued to improve and are well above national averages.

The reviews of pupils' progress carried out by leaders and staff are followed through meticulously and have ensured that no child is left behind. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress from their starting points

in all year groups.

You and the governing body are ambitious for the school and have a clear strategic plan to build on its significant achievements. The school's values, 'Trust, Fairness and Respect', can be seen in pupils' attitudes and underpin the school's behaviour policy. Pupils talk about their school with great pride. Their attendance is excellent, with 97.4% attendance in 2017/18 being the highest in Westminster. Leaders and governors have invested in resources to help staff deliver an exciting, innovative curriculum which has great breadth and depth. This is under regular evaluation and scrutiny to ensure that it remains fresh and vibrant for the pupils. Members of the school council spoke to me about how exciting learning is at their school. Parents and carers in the playground and pupils with whom I spoke said they would recommend the school to others. Responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire were also highly positive.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Robust systems and processes are in place and, as a result, all staff know how to report any safeguarding concerns. As a team, you follow up any issues carefully and swiftly, working well with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders complete the required checks to ensure that all staff are suitable to work in the school. These checks are recorded in the single central record, which is updated and monitored regularly by leaders and governors.

You make sure that all staff have received regular and appropriate safeguarding training that supports their understanding of the current statutory guidance. You remind staff frequently about their duties in safeguarding pupils. There is a rolling programme of staff training in place so that all staff are kept fully aware of the risks that pupils may be facing, such as keeping safe online and the dangers of radicalisation. Pupils with whom I spoke all expressed a genuine sense of safety and well-being in the school. They are confident that you and your staff will keep them safe and respond promptly to any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to explore the school's view that approaches to reading contribute to high standards in writing and to check if these high standards are reflected in books across the wider curriculum.
- Both middle and senior leaders are clear that the school's investment in reading has been the catalyst for raising standards in writing. Every class works from a core text on a three-weekly cycle. Each text is carefully chosen to develop pupils' imagination, vocabulary, language structure and a love of reading. Where possible, careful links are made to the wider curriculum so that pupils apply their reading skills to writing in a range of contexts.
- Each classroom has a 'learning lounge' which adjoins it. You have secured additional funding every year to make sure that the highest-quality books are available to your pupils. These are carefully selected from a range of well-known

long lists and are always different from the books the pupils use in class. One child told me how much he loves the learning lounge and how it has helped him to read more. He said, 'We are a very lucky school.'

- Teachers give the same value to writing in every subject. Pupils take great care with their work. Academic expectations are high and pupils know the standard expected in terms of presentation, care and orderliness. The quality of pupils' work and the progress I saw in their books across a range of subjects, in all year groups and over time, are consistently high. The value placed on reading has given pupils the language and confidence to write fluently, and the breadth and depth of the work I saw were impressive.
- My next line of enquiry was how middle leadership had developed since the previous inspection, when it was identified as an area for improvement. In particular, I wanted to see how standards across the wider curriculum were being assessed and monitored by middle leaders.
- Your drive to develop others is demonstrated by your strong middle leadership team, which, together with the senior leadership team, has rewritten the school's creative curriculum. This is linked to all the requirements of the national curriculum. The result is a thorough, innovative and sequential curriculum which builds knowledge and inspires the children, as shown by their books across all subjects.
- I met with the leaders of science, the creative curriculum, mathematics, art and English, and with the leaders responsible for pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils. All were able to describe how closely they work together as a team. Together, they have developed an assessment system which is not overburdensome to teachers but is having a significant impact on the depth and coverage of the wider curriculum. This work started in 2014 and is now becoming more established and having a significant impact on outcomes.
- Finally, I looked at leaders' actions to improve standards in science. This was because pupils' performance in science was not as good as in other subjects in 2017. Science has improved rapidly since that time. In 2018, unvalidated results show that 90% of pupils attained the national standard in science and 39% of pupils attained the high standard.
- The science leader has worked collaboratively with a local secondary school leader to achieve this. Pupils are thrilled and excited with this provision, particularly their new purpose-built science laboratory. I saw Year 6 pupils conducting an experiment to find out how the quantity of effervescent tablet affects the height to which a rocket can rise. They were really enjoying the explosion, but were also keeping accurate recordings of what was happening. The rapid improvement in pupils' attainment in science, together with the quality of science work in their books, is evidence that they are developing a deeper understanding and love of science that prepare them well for study in secondary school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to review, evaluate and consolidate assessment systems across the wider curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Susan Ladipo
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, your deputy headteacher and members of the governing body to discuss the school's self-evaluation and the actions leaders have taken to maintain and improve the quality of education provided. I also spoke with the school improvement partner from the local authority. I visited all classrooms with you, and observed and talked to pupils as they were learning. I met with all your middle leaders. Together with the deputy headteacher, I also looked at examples of pupils' work and assessment information across all subjects to evaluate pupils' outcomes over time and across the curriculum. I reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation and the single central record of vetting checks on staff. I considered the views of parents through the 34 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered 37 responses from pupils and 11 responses from staff to the Ofsted surveys.