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Mrs Lisa Carmen and Mrs Anna Healy
Co-headteachers
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Dear Mrs Carmen and Mrs Healy

Short inspection of West Hill Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 December 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.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You communicate very well your vision for a caring, 'local community' school with high academic standards. Your leadership team shares this vision and is committed to and enthusiastic about your ambitious plans for further improvement. Staff and governors understand the key areas for development that you have identified, such as the school's priority to improve pupils' writing through the structured use of language. Parents say that the school is well led and told me how much their children enjoy their learning.

Leaders work hard to make sure that all pupils have a wide range of experiences so that they develop as confident, well-informed and responsible members of society. These include having visitors to the school such as theatre companies, artists and writers, and taking part in after-school clubs and school trips to museums, the farm or places of historic interest. There have also been recent opportunities to take part in 'work experience' to widen pupils' horizons and get them thinking about their future careers.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection were to build pupils' confidence so they keep working hard even when the work is difficult for them; and to encourage pupils to use what they have learned previously to help them speak and write in detail. You have successfully responded by introducing specific teaching programmes for reading, writing and mathematics. You have also deeply embedded a positive 'can

do' culture throughout the school; pupils consistently say, 'It's not I can't, it's I can't yet.' One pupil told me, 'It doesn't matter if you try and get it wrong, it's better than not trying at all – teachers are never cross with you.' In all classes, I saw pupils concentrating on their lessons. Many of them have high aspirations to go to university and become lawyers, doctors or computer programmers, for example. Because of the opportunities on offer at school, they have realistic expectations of the skills and knowledge they will have to gain in order to reach their goals.

The previous inspection also identified the monitoring of how well pupils are learning, particularly the most able pupils, as an area for improvement. Effective systems for monitoring pupils' progress have been introduced and teachers use them well to make sure that their pupils make good progress.

Many pupils enter Reception Year below the standard for their age. Effective teaching helps children in Nursery and Reception classes and pupils in key stage 1 to make strong progress. However, a below-average proportion reach the expected standard by the end of key stage 1. You are addressing this effectively through your school improvement work. Teaching and learning in key stage 2 are consistently strong. As a result, pupils make sufficient progress in reading and mathematics to catch up with other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6. In 2018, pupils' progress in Year 6 was in the top 10% for all schools nationally in reading and mathematics. However, progress in writing is not as strong as the other subjects and this was identified as a line of enquiry for the inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All necessary checks are carried out on staff, volunteers and visitors. You have successfully created a culture of vigilance, underpinned by regular training for all staff and governors. Staff are alert to any signs of abuse or neglect and act swiftly to make sure that pupils are kept safe. Records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on three key lines of enquiry, the first of which was how effectively leaders are increasing the proportion of pupils who reach the higher standard in writing.
- You and your staff have worked on a number of strategies to improve the teaching and learning of writing. In early years, children begin to learn about letter sounds in Nursery Year so they are more confident to have a go at writing when they start in Reception Year. Leaders regularly monitor the quality of phonics teaching and check children's and pupils' progress. These actions contribute to the good progress they are making. As a result, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 increased in 2018.
- Your strategy to develop teachers' confidence in using a range of visual prompts to teach writing has also been effective. We saw the consistent use of these prompts in many classes. This was particularly effective for pupils who speak English as an additional language. All of the pupils enjoyed using the prompts to tell stories and

improve their writing. Additionally, clarification of the school's assessment system has helped teachers to provide the challenge in lessons that most-able pupils need to reach the higher standards.

- The effective teaching of writing is reflected in the strong progress shown in pupils' writing books in some classes. The pupils told me that having the opportunity to explore text through discussion and drama helped them to improve their use of sentence structure and vocabulary. Pupils are proud of their writing. We saw them taking great care as they wrote with determination to capture their ideas. As yet, however, the new strategies are not applied consistently across the school and some pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable to reach the higher standard.
- Second, we looked at the effectiveness of the newly appointed middle leadership team in contributing to school improvement. Middle leaders are clear about what they must do to support the school's work to raise standards. They have taken part in training to use information about pupils' progress and attainment to improve teaching and learning. The local authority has supported you well with this training.
- You and the middle leadership team make sure that teaching strategies are planned, evaluated and adapted carefully. Middle leaders also work with teachers to help them track pupils' progress carefully so that they can identify any underachievement or gaps in learning.
- The final area we considered was the way in which governors are supporting school leaders and challenging them on the impact of school improvement strategies.
- Governors are knowledgeable about your plans to improve the school. They understand their duties with regard to safeguarding. However, their visits to the school are insufficiently focused on the impact of leaders' actions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching strategies are consolidated throughout the school so that more pupils attain the higher standard in writing
- governors develop their understanding of how to hold leaders to account on the impact of their work in order to support them in raising standards of teaching and learning even further.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanna Brinkley
Ofsted inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with senior and middle leaders. I held a meeting with governors. I scrutinised pupils' work in English. I visited lessons in Nursery, Reception and key stages 1 and 2. I talked to pupils about their learning throughout the day as I visited lessons. I heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 5 read. I analysed 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I scrutinised documentation including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, pupils' attendance information, documentation related to safeguarding and the school's assessment and behaviour information.