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Ms Meghan Pugh
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Pugh

Short inspection of Downsview Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 15 January 2019 with Kanwaljit Singh, Ofsted Inspector, 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Since taking up your post in September 2018, you have correctly identified the strengths of the school and the priorities for improvement. These include senior leaders working with middle leaders to develop greater effectiveness in their areas of responsibility.

An area for improvement from the previous inspection was for more pupils to make better progress in reading in key stage 2. Strategies were introduced which led to improved outcomes in 2018, with pupils achieving results well above the national averages. Overall in 2018, pupils' results in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly above the key stage 2 national averages.

Governors demonstrate an understanding of the priorities for the school, including raising pupils' progress in writing at key stage 2. They have been involved with the training that has supported the introduction of initiatives to raise progress in writing. They are knowledgeable about the work undertaken with two other local schools to help validate pupils' attainment at Downsview. They are proud of the range of trips and activities that enrich the curriculum offer at the school, including the residential at Ufton Court and the cultural celebration days.

The local authority provides support for the school based on an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to ensure continued improvement. It has provided good support for school initiatives.

Pupils demonstrate engagement and enjoyment in their learning. They say that teachers help them to improve their work through helpful explanation and encouragement. Pupils are pleased with the range of clubs and trips that the school provides. Overall, the parents, carers, staff and pupils hold positive views about the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors have implemented effective systems and policies to safeguard pupils. When there are any safeguarding concerns, the reporting and referral procedures in place are understood and followed by staff precisely. All appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school are conducted and correctly recorded on the school's single central record. Senior leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment. Staff have completed the training necessary for them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

Posters with the names and photographs of the safeguarding leads are highly visible around the school. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and they know that adults will listen to them and take the appropriate action if they have concerns. Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons.

Inspection findings

- The previous inspection identified that the attainment gap between boys and girls in the early years needed to close rapidly. We agreed that the first line of enquiry for the inspection would focus on leaders' actions to develop the provision in the early years setting to improve boys' progress.
- The leadership of the early years is strong and newer members of staff are well supported. Staff recognise the importance of children's personal development within the early years setting. Procedures for monitoring children's progress are effective. Staff have high expectations of the children and provide support and challenge. There is good curriculum provision, both inside and outside the Reception classes. There is a focus on developing oral skills, and the teaching of phonics was observed to be strong.
- The school has introduced initiatives in reading to engage the pupils, particularly the boys. There was also evidence that progress was being made in the development of their writing skills. In 2018, overall, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average. Although boys' starting points in the early years are lower than those of girls, they are now making stronger progress.
- The second line of enquiry explored leaders' strategies to raise pupils' progress in writing in key stage 2. In 2018, pupils' attainment in writing was above the national average, but their progress was not. Progress in reading and mathematics was stronger and much improved from the previous year.
- An initiative to raise pupils' progress in writing through the development of oracy skills has recently been introduced. Observations in lessons confirmed the

positive effect it is having on the teaching of writing. Pupils and staff demonstrated high levels of engagement and enjoyment with this new approach. Pupils could confidently explain how to improve their writing through the use of synonyms and the wider vocabulary they were acquiring. High-quality texts have been introduced that expose the pupils to a richer vocabulary. Pupils' work confirmed that progress was being made in writing across a number of subjects.

- Leaders of English have introduced rigorous systems to track pupils' progress in writing across subjects. Senior leaders support the middle leaders, and they jointly monitor and review the teaching and learning of writing. They acknowledge that initiatives are at a relatively early stage of development and need to be fully embedded in order to assess their impact on pupils' progress.
- The third line of enquiry explored how leaders are developing pupils' breadth of knowledge across all subjects. This was to evaluate the success of the school's aim that 'our curriculum is broad and balanced and, whenever possible, we try to link learning across a range of subjects'. The school also aims to ensure that pupils fully engage with all aspects of the curriculum.
- Good provision is in place for a range of subjects, including science, history, geography, art, music, religious education, physical education, dance and Spanish. Specialist teachers are providing quality learning experiences that engage the pupils. Examples of strong practice were observed in art, dance, music, physical education and Spanish. Work in pupils' books showed the breadth of subjects being studied. Links between learning were seen, particularly in art, physical education, science and Spanish. A wide range of visits and visitors further enriches the curriculum.
- Senior leaders are clear about further developments that will support teaching and learning across subjects. Detailed planning of how learning is linked across subjects was seen, including resources to strengthen progress in reading and writing. While there is some best practice among middle leaders, this is not shared with less experienced colleagues who lack breadth of knowledge across the curriculum.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff continue the good work to improve writing so that better progress is achieved in key stage 2
- best subject practice is shared to further develop breadth of knowledge across the 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 Croydon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Simber
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you and senior leaders to discuss your plans for improvement and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. We met to agree the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. A meeting was held with the school business manager to review the single central record. A discussion was held to review the safeguarding procedures at the school. We jointly visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning, and to speak to pupils. We reviewed pupils' work across a number of subjects. Discussions were held with several members of the governing body and the school improvement partner. We met with several middle leaders to discuss their work. A discussion was held with pupils to find out about their views of the school. The 83 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were reviewed, as were the 36 responses to the staff questionnaire, and the 222 responses to the pupil questionnaire.