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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Karen Kent
Headteacher
Menorah Foundation School
Abbots Road
Burnt Oak
Edgware
Middlesex
HA8 0QS

Dear Mrs Kent

Short inspection of Menorah Foundation School

Following my visit to the school on 13 June 2019, 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 May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your calm and determined leadership has ensured that those around you share your vision for school improvement. Your careful monitoring of all aspects of the school's work has enabled you to identify strengths and areas for improvement. You have successfully addressed several of these areas in the relatively short time since you became the headteacher this academic year.

You have developed a capable team of middle leaders who have begun to make a significant impact on raising standards. You rightly place a strong emphasis on developing teachers and have invested in this so that they receive the training and guidance needed to deliver effective learning.

You know the community well, and parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and your leadership. As one parent said: 'The school is a warm, caring and supportive environment run by senior managers and staff who really care about individual children and the school as a whole.'

The atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils are polite and show respect to adults and each other. They are keen to learn and think creatively. They participate well in lessons and display mature attitudes and opinions when they talk about the curriculum and what they are learning.

You are well supported by a team of highly effective governors who also share your clear vision for the school. They work closely with you to identify priorities and evaluate progress. They have a sharp focus on school development and visit the school often. Governors ask challenging questions of you and other leaders and are highly ambitious for all pupils. They agree with you that there is no ceiling on what the pupils can achieve.

Safeguarding is effective.

The designated safeguarding leaders are highly effective. They have made sure that all staff are well trained in reporting concerns about pupils. This means that pupils are well cared for in this school. Records are detailed and stored securely; they show that the school is systematic and dogged in their follow-up of any issues that have arisen.

Policies and procedures are up to date and regularly scrutinised by governors to ensure that they meet statutory requirements. Governors are very clear about the potential risks to pupils and support the school effectively to mitigate them. The single central record meets requirements.

The curriculum is well planned to support pupils in understanding how to stay safe. They talk confidently about topics such as online safety. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and trust all adults there to help them.

Inspection findings

- The first key line of enquiry focused on how staff in the early years provide the children with meaningful opportunities to practise the skills they need to meet their goals by the end of Reception. This was because it was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection and is something the school now believes is a strength.
- The provision for the children in the early years is highly engaging and stimulating. Indoor and outdoor learning is organised so that children have opportunities to read, write and play imaginatively. They build, experiment and problem-solve using these resources and are constantly learning as they play.
- Texts are well chosen and used to very positive effect throughout the different areas of learning. Children take the initial stimulus and develop it to practise their mathematics, art and English skills to a high standard and they love doing this. They are happy and motivated to learn.
- The curriculum is well planned to make best use of trips, visits and visitors to the school. The recent visit to a local farm and the chicks that they had in class have given even the most reluctant writers a reason to write for a purpose. They were inspired by these experiences and this shines through in the writing they have produced.
- The second line of enquiry focused on how the guidance given to pupils in English and mathematics helps them to improve their work and rates of progress.

This was because it was identified as an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection and the school has also noted some small variations in the progress of different groups by the end of key stage 2.

- Teachers now provide clear and concise feedback in English and mathematics. In the majority of classes, the pupils' outcomes show that they routinely act upon this feedback when seeking to improve their writing or considering different mathematical approaches when problem-solving.
- After recent and well considered changes to the teaching of writing, pupils edit and improve their own writing effectively. They are also starting to transfer these skills across the curriculum, for example in history and geography. They are proud of their work and there is evidence of the progress they are making because of this approach. However, the school recognises that pupils could make even greater progress as this new initiative embeds and will continue to work on this area.
- The third line of enquiry was about how well the wider curriculum gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding they need as they move through the school. This is because the school felt that the development of the curriculum was a strength.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of how to develop and extend pupils through the different subjects. They also regularly integrate these subjects with the Jewish studies curriculum to ensure maximum impact. They plan, monitor and evaluate the curriculum effectively and are quick to spot opportunities to further improve it. As a result, they have introduced a new approach to collecting pupils' responses in science. These books show the strong progress pupils make in science and the consistent coverage in different year groups.
- The use of key texts has begun to enrich the pupils' outcomes in history in some classes. They talk with knowledge and enthusiasm about how they make links between the subjects and these stories. Some of the strongest progress seen in the wider curriculum was seen as a result of this approach and the school intends to build on this further next year.
- The showcases of learning, like the recent Victorian day, give pupils the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned to other year groups. They design and present the information in a creative and engaging way for younger pupils when doing this. Older pupils were then able to help Year 1 link what they knew about old and new toys with other information about this period of history.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue the work they have begun to accelerate the progress of all learners so that there is a further increase in the proportions working at the higher standard in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools

commissioner and the director of children's services for Barnet. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karen Matthews
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, and with senior and middle leaders. I met with four governors and your school improvement adviser. I met with pupils from a number of year groups. I visited classrooms across the school with senior leaders to gather evidence about the key lines of enquiry and to look at pupils' work. I considered documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, and documents relating to safeguarding. I also looked at information on the school's website. I analysed the confidential responses to the online inspection surveys from 11 pupils. I spoke with one parent by telephone. I also took into account the views of 154 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 150 free-text responses.