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Jennie Bird
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Dear Jennie Bird

Short inspection of Harry Gosling Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2017, 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have developed a very caring and harmonious environment where all feel valued. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school. They feel that they are always welcome and can approach senior leaders. This year's theme, 'Little things make big things happen', shows the school's emphasis on qualities such as effort and resilience.

You have a good understanding of the needs of pupils and their lives beyond the school gate. Together with your team of committed senior leaders, you have raised aspirations and expectations. Pupils have been inspired by trips to Oxford and Cambridge Universities; many now want to study there themselves in the future. Pupils are quite rightly proud of their school. The school grounds provide places for pupils to reflect as well as areas for physical activity. One pupil told me, 'I love coming here. It's like a park and there aren't any near where I live.' You make sure that pupils learn about life in modern Britain. They learn about democratic processes, for example, through the election of the school council representatives.

Governors meet their statutory duties effectively. They know the school well and regularly visit classes and talk to pupils and parents. They provide a good level of challenge to you and other leaders. They regularly work with leaders and local authority partners to ensure that pupils make good progress. They place particular emphasis on the progress of those pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium grant. Leaders and governors accurately identify key priorities for further improvement and take effective actions to address them.

At the time of the previous inspection, you were asked to raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics. You have addressed this by developing accurate and reliable assessment systems. You have provided training for teachers so they are now fully aware of what pupils need to learn next and how to plan well to meet this need. A range of strategies is helping pupils to improve at mathematics; they are developing fast recall in multiplication, for example. You were also asked to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching across the school. The school's monitoring system shows that teachers are provided with useful feedback on how to improve. School leaders systematically check that teachers are putting the advice and support they have been given into their daily practice. Finally, you were asked to strengthen the role of leaders, especially middle leaders. This had been achieved through a mentoring and coaching programme, which has been so effective that the school now 'grows' its own middle and senior leaders from within. Leaders at all levels are given autonomy and are robustly held to account for pupils' progress. Middle leaders learn from the senior team how to monitor lessons, analyse data and check pupils' work to ensure that they are achieving the planned outcomes. They also talk regularly to pupils about their learning to check that they are engaged and motivated. This is having a positive impact on how well pupils achieve. All available assessment information shows that pupils' progress and outcomes are good.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and are fit for purpose. The school maintains comprehensive and thorough records that are of a high quality, including referrals made to external agencies. The safeguarding culture at the school is strong. Staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe, and their knowledge of statutory guidance is up to date. Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns.

Pupils know they are too young to use social media and know what steps they should take to keep themselves safe online. Pupils know what constitutes bullying and feel that there is very little bullying in the school. They trust that the adults around them will help to keep them safe. They reported that they would feel confident to tell the adults in the school if they had a problem, or suspected that someone else was being bullied.

Inspection findings

- During our initial meeting, we agreed that I would look in particular at how effective leaders' actions have been in accelerating the progress of boys in the early years. The proportion of boys achieving the expected good level of development was lower than that found nationally in 2016. Provisional data for 2017 shows improvement, but there is still a gap between boys' and girls' outcomes by the end of their Reception year.
- You have worked hard to ensure that parental involvement helps to improve outcomes, particularly for boys. The school successfully runs a range of activities to engage parents and extended families in learning. These include reading meetings, targeted at the parents of boys. There is also a den-making event, to encourage the involvement of male family members.
- The early years curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it is interesting and engaging to all children, so that boys have as good a start as do girls. This has been effective. Boys in the Reception class talked enthusiastically about their work. For example, one boy commented on his work on people who help us, saying, 'Paramedics

are really important because they get to the accidents first to help you.' Boys working in the outside classroom demonstrated high levels of concentration and were able to play cooperatively, taking turns and sharing. However, it was notable that boys did not take up opportunities to write on boards in the outside classroom. Current data shows that while, overall, boys' achievement has improved and gaps are closing, more needs to be done to ensure that boys make the progress of which they are capable.

- Based on my analysis of children's outcomes in the early years, I also considered what actions leaders are taking to close gaps and accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years is good and, by the end of Year 1, more pupils pass the phonic screening check than is found nationally. In key stage 1, pupils use their good phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words when reading. However, weak comprehension and vocabulary skills still hold back the progress of some pupils.
- Teachers are skilled at ensuring that pupils first speak about what they intend to write. The impact of this was observed in a writing session in Year 1 in which pupils wrote their own stories about 'the evil pillow', based on the outline they had rehearsed. However, pupils' writing shows a lack of confidence in using the knowledge they acquire in reading to make their own writing more complex and interesting.
- Teachers model how to use a range of grammatical structures clearly and help pupils improve their writing by using connectives, adjectives and adverbs, for example. This, with planned opportunities to edit and improve their work, is helping to ensure that most pupils make good progress in writing. However, they do not consistently apply the skills they are being taught in English when writing in other subjects.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics is enabling pupils to study in more depth and develop a more secure understanding of mathematical concepts. This is working well for the majority of children. However, as you are aware, there are times when the most able would benefit from greater challenge.
- My third line of enquiry was to evaluate how well the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils. I found that the curriculum is broad and balanced so that pupils have opportunities to study the humanities, arts and sciences in depth. While the majority of pupils only have physical exercise lessons for one hour each week, the curriculum is supplemented by a range of clubs involving physical activity that run before and after school, and at lunchtime. Additionally, pupils experience a wealth of trips and visitors to enhance their learning.
- Finally, I considered how effective leaders' actions have been to ensure good attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities. I found that you have maintained above-average attendance rates for all pupils and that attendance for this group of pupils is now at least in line with that of their peers nationally.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- boys achieve as well as girls, particularly in the early years, so that they are as well prepared for the next stage of their education

- pupils' reading comprehension and their understanding of key vocabulary are strengthened so they help improve writing across a range of subjects particularly in key stage 1.

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

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- I held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and governors.
- I visited lessons in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 to observe learning and hear pupils reading. I scrutinised pupils' work in English, mathematics, reading and topic books.
- I talked to pupils about their learning, both at formal and informal times throughout the day.
- I met with parents at the start of the school day and I analysed the small number of responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, as well as responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- I scrutinised documentation including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans' information on pupils' attendance' documentation related to safeguarding' the school's assessment and behaviour information.