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Dr Alan Shaw
Headteacher
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Dear Dr Shaw

Short inspection of Hasmonean Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 2019 with Jude Wilson, Her Majesty's 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 last inspection. You continue to provide committed leadership, supported by a stable leadership team and staff. Leaders have prioritised the areas for improvement identified during the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils' understanding of different faiths, beliefs and cultures has improved. The school's philosophy of 'the law of the land is our law' was evident to see during the inspection.

This is a high-attaining school in which pupils enjoy their learning. Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading and mathematics have been well above national averages. However, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics. Further development of pupils' writing skills continues to be a priority for school improvement.

Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they feel safe at school. Pupils are well-mannered and extremely welcoming. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the nurture and support their children receive.

Governors provide strong direction to the school. They are knowledgeable and use their expertise well to provide challenge to leaders. Governors make regular visits to the school, including as individual link governors. This helps governors gain deep insight into the success of new initiatives. For example, governors worked with leaders to evaluate the difference that a new writing scheme made. However,

governors have not scrutinised the work of leaders closely enough to ensure that some statutory policies and procedures are updated in a timely manner.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that the school's safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders complete pre-employment checks thoroughly. Staff and governors receive up-to-date safeguarding training, including relating to female genital mutilation. Staff know the school's procedures well, including how to use external agencies when concerns are raised.

Leaders take pupils' safety seriously and are tenacious in following up concerns. Leaders demonstrate an insightful understanding of vulnerable families and pupils. They use a variety of specialists to provide additional support when required.

Leaders promote pupils' awareness of risk and safety effectively, for example through a pupils' 'safety squad'. This initiative encourages pupils to report any concerns they have regarding the school site. Regular reminders, including from external workshops, also help pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of safety, including the dangers of social media. Pupils told inspectors that they have many adults to turn to should they have a concern.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to look at the effectiveness of leaders' action to improve pupils' writing. We chose this because since the previous inspection Year 6 pupils' progress in writing was not as strong as in reading or mathematics.
- Leaders have prioritised the improvement in pupils' writing, which is well led. As a result, the quality of pupils' writing is high. In key stage 1, pupils write fluently and neatly. They spell and use punctuation accurately, and apply their learned phonics sounds well. Pupils in key stage 2 write well and standards are in line with the national average.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop their writing across the curriculum, including through teachers linking writing more closely to the books that pupils read in class. This is beginning to make a positive difference. For example, pupils wrote diary entries linked to a dentist's visit, using a good range of vocabulary. Pupils write extended pieces in their science and topic subjects and write fluently about themed celebrations.
- However, leaders have not fully embedded these developments in writing in all year groups. Furthermore, teachers' expectations about the quality of pupils' writing in subjects other than English, including in Jewish studies, are not consistently high. On occasions, the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Next, we looked at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to develop pupils' understanding of different cultures, faiths and beliefs. This was identified as an area for improvement during the previous inspection.

- Leaders have taken effective steps to improve this aspect of pupils' education. For example, during 'cultural awareness weeks' pupils learn about different nations, for example Brazil and China. As a result, pupils learn about differences in cultural practices, including food, dress and celebrations.
- Leaders have developed the curriculum well to enhance pupils' understanding of those with different faiths and beliefs. Leaders have forged links with a Catholic primary school to broaden pupils' understanding of those with different beliefs. Through this link, pupils write letters to pen pals and meet pupils to learn about their religious practices. Pupils speak articulately about their learning from these experiences.
- Leaders promote a strong focus on British values. Pupils learn about the importance of law and deepen their understanding through additional trips, including to Parliament. The school's Jewish values underpin leaders' and teachers' work to promote tolerance for all, regardless of background. For example, pupils told inspectors about different lifestyles and families in modern day Britain and the need to 'respect everyone'.
- Finally, we looked at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to develop mathematics. This was because, since the previous inspection, key stage 2 pupils' progress in mathematics was well above the national average.
- Teachers develop pupils' ability to do mental and written calculations very strongly. Pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics and use a range of strategies while completing their work. They are confident in being able to explain their methods with confidence. However, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations of pupils' writing across the curriculum, including in Jewish studies, are consistently high, particularly for the most able pupils, so that all pupils make the progress in writing of which they are capable
- pupils have increased opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics
- governors and leaders review statutory policies in a timely manner.

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

Noeman Anwar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors visited classrooms and scrutinised pupils' books, accompanied by senior and middle leaders. Inspectors carried out a review of the school's documentation, including the school's safeguarding information. Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders for English and mathematics, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors considered the views of pupils in lessons and in the playground. Finally, inspectors considered the views of parents at the end of the day and through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 85 responses from parents.