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18 December 2017

Mr Kevin Minns  
Headteacher  
Donnington Primary School  
Uffington Road  
London  
NW10 3TL

Dear Mr Minns

### **Short inspection of Donnington Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 5 December 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 last inspection. Since arriving at the school in September 2016, you have established a concrete vision and consolidated the school's strengths. You have wasted no time in identifying the key issues for improvement.

Your middle and senior leaders share your determination to improve pupils' outcomes. Together, you have invested in staff training to improve their use of assessment. This has resulted in better understanding and use of data, which is enabling them to monitor pupils' progress much more closely. During the half-termly pupil progress meetings, leaders check to see whether pupils are making enough progress. If it is found that they are not, then support is provided quickly to prevent pupils from falling behind.

Leaders at all levels, including governors, know the school well. The governing body has confidence in your leadership skills, and the local authority has been very supportive of the school. Governors have used additional funds well, by investing in more experienced teachers to strengthen the teaching workforce and to provide adequate support for disadvantaged pupils.

Most parents reported that their children are safe. They have confidence that the school is moving in the right direction and that the changes have been good for the school.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The school's safeguarding procedures are effective. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of good quality. Leaders and governors have ensured that policies and procedures promote and communicate vigilance to all staff. There are clear procedures for making complaints and whistleblowing. Staff training is up to date. Leaders engage well with external agencies to support and safeguard children. Staff know whom to go to when concerned.

The chair of governors and headteacher countercheck procedures for recruitment and safety regularly. This is to ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. The caring ethos around the school enables pupils to feel included in decisions relating to safety. For example, the older pupils take on some of the responsibilities for caring for and supporting the younger pupils in their role as 'red hats' in the playground.

The school has zero tolerance toward absences. Strategies to tackle poor attendance and high persistent absenteeism have been effective. Attendance is now above average.

Pupils understand how to use the internet safely. Parents reported that their children are safe, well cared for and supported. A few parents and staff, who responded to the online survey, suggested that the school does not always deal with behaviour concerns with urgency. Inspection evidence found that this is no longer the case.

## **Inspection findings**

- We first agreed to look at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that key stage 1 pupils make good progress in mathematics, reading and writing. This is because the proportion of pupils who achieved national standards in phonics in 2017 was below national average. Writing and mathematics outcomes at the end of key stage 1 were below national averages in 2017.
- Leaders introduced a new phonics scheme to standardise the way in which phonics is taught. Leaders have also reorganised how reading sessions are planned and delivered. In our visits to lessons, we found pupils working at expected standards in phonics. They were able to explain what they were learning. Some of the most able pupils have moved to more challenging comprehension groups.
- Recent gains in phonics and reading have impacted on outcomes in writing, particularly in Year 2. For example, pupils are now more confident and accomplished in writing at length for different situations. However, leaders acknowledge that writing activities are not always challenging enough to enable the most able pupils to achieve their best.
- In addition to supporting key stage 1 pupils, senior managers have put in place effective strategies to strengthen and reorganise phonics teaching in the

Reception class. This has resulted in improvements in the development of early reading and writing. This means that more children are better prepared for Year 1. Nevertheless, leaders correctly acknowledge that more is still needed to improve the outcomes of pupils in Year 1.

- Leaders bought in a new scheme to improve mathematics; they also bought in additional expertise to support teachers in delivering improved mathematics outcomes. Inspection evidence shows that more pupils are working at or towards expected standards in mathematics as a result.
- We next looked at the effectiveness of leaders' actions in improving mathematics and writing outcomes at key stage 2. This is because 2017 data shows that key stage 2 outcomes in writing and mathematics were below national averages, and the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth was below national averages.
- Work scrutiny showed evidence that more pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are working towards greater depth in mathematics. For example, pupils routinely justified reasons for their answers and showed understanding of what to do to improve their work.
- During our visits to lessons, the pupils I spoke to were able to explain their work in writing with confidence; they also linked their writing to the novels they had read. Pupils demonstrated that they have the experience needed to develop their writing across the curriculum.
- Finally, we looked at the impact of leaders' action to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2. This is because 2017 data showed that the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were below national averages.
- Leaders have prioritised the need to increase the proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting expected standards in mathematics, writing and reading in key stage 1.
- Governors and senior leaders recognise pockets of inconsistencies in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2. Senior leaders have developed clear provision maps to accelerate progress rates. For example, due to the quality of focused small-group work, a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are making progress towards expected standards in key stage 1. However, the intervention is not always consistently urgent.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide activities that challenge the most able to deepen their understanding of what they are learning
- teachers ensure that more disadvantaged pupils achieve expected standards in mathematics and writing.

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Maureen Okoye  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I carried out joint visits to classrooms with senior staff. I also met with the chair of governors. I heard a range of children in Years 1, 2 and 6 read. I scrutinised pupils' work and discussed their learning experience with them. I met with the business manager to look at arrangements for checking the suitability of staff. I met with the school effectiveness partner from the local authority.

I took into account the eight responses by parents to Ofsted's online survey and the views from nine parents whom I met at the school gate. I scrutinised the views of 16 staff members. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about the school's achievement, records of leaders' information about attendance, the school improvement plan, safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.