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Mrs Veronica Shepherd  
Hillside Junior School  
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Dear Mrs Shepherd

### **Short inspection of Hillside Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 December 2015 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 November 2010.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

You have secured further improvements in the quality of education since becoming headteacher in December 2012. You have established a culture of ambition and high expectations for everyone. All pupils, irrespective of background, ability and gender, thrive in a safe and nurturing environment. Consistency is at the heart of all the school's work, because the school's policies and procedures are constantly and effectively implemented. Pupils appreciate the praise and rewards they receive in recognition for their excellent behaviour, conduct and effort. Interesting, well-pitched activities and strong relationships secure pupils' very positive and mature attitude to learning. This has a significant impact on their progress. Pupils enjoy their learning, particularly when they visit a wide range of places of worship and local London attractions, including 10 Downing Street. These experiences help to promote pupils' understanding of democracy, as well as encouraging them to be tolerant and to appreciate individual differences.

You have no room for complacency. You are constantly looking for ways to secure further improvements. This provides your staff with a clear mandate to research and implement innovative improvement strategies. You have developed a cohesive school where everyone is on board to make sure that the school is well on its

journey to outstanding. All inspection evidence, from discussions to questionnaires, reflects high levels of satisfaction from pupils, parents and staff.

Leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection in November 2010. Your focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has led to considerable improvements in the quality of teaching in writing and mathematics. As a consequence, attainment in these two subjects has risen and is now above national averages. All groups of pupils make consistently good progress in these two subjects. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs often make rapid progress in all three core subjects, across Key Stage 2. Your improvement plan is tightly focused on making sure that progress towards excellence is secured. Priorities and actions build on existing effective practice. There are measurable targets based on pupil achievement, so that you and your staff can assess the progress you are making towards your challenging targets. Leaders are now tackling weaker achievement in reading. As a result there are early indications that progress in this subject is beginning to speed up in order to match that in writing and mathematics. However, despite concerted efforts to improve attendance rates, too many disadvantaged pupils do not attend regularly enough.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders, including governors, have clear policies relating to safeguarding. The safeguarding, e-safety and radicalisation policies reflect the latest statutory guidance. Training at all levels is up to date. Everyone is fully aware of their duties, including those relating to preventing radicalisation, female genital mutilation and keeping pupils safe when using technology. Pupils are keenly aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet. They do all they can to prevent any incidents of bullying, as outlined in the video they have made. One pupil's statement reflects the collective approach to eliminating any bullying: 'It's better to be a buddy than a bully.'

The designated safeguarding lead member of staff ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. The school liaises effectively with all agencies to safeguard pupils. There is a clear and systematic approach to all aspects of safeguarding. All the required vetting checks for all staff, including supply staff and volunteers, are undertaken rigorously.

### **Inspection findings**

- There is a whole-school commitment to school improvement. Leaders have established a clear system to monitor and evaluate new initiatives, which inform self-evaluation well.
- With a constant focus on seeking to improve, leaders have initiated different ways of working. For example, from your own evaluations you identified that sometimes girls can be overwhelmed by the sheer exuberance of the boys in problem-solving situations, inhibiting their

participation. As a result, there are now weekly problem-solving activities where boys and girls learn separately. Your methodical checks and evaluations of the impact of this new way of working show that girls are now equally as confident to take risks and apply their mathematical skills and understanding as well as the boys. As a result, all groups of pupils make good and often rapid progress in this subject.

- Likewise, leaders and all staff waste no time in plugging any gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. Through continual assessment, pupils who struggle in lessons are quickly identified and have 'same day' interventions with teaching assistants to clarify their misconceptions. This strategy also pre-empts any potential barriers, as those pupils who either begin to find the work hard or start to lose confidence are also given a daily instant boost to their learning.
- Leaders at all levels are involved in working parties to develop new initiatives. You have extended this practice by working with other schools. Consequently, leaders are clear in their roles and responsibilities. Both the English and mathematics leaders network effectively with a cluster of local schools to maximise expertise and to secure accuracy of assessments. Staff continually refine the new assessment process to make sure that information is accurate and is used precisely to plan the right activities to promote effective learning and progress.
- The English leader works closely with an external consultant to make sure that the school's new teaching programme is maximising learning and speeding up progress, both in writing and, especially, in reading. Those Year 3 pupils with gaps in their phonic knowledge (letters and the sounds they make) are taught systematically and with precision how to read and spell unfamiliar words. Checks on teaching are regular and focused on how it is helping to improve pupils' learning.
- Specific action plans prioritise further areas to work on in promoting pupils' reading skills. Both spelling and grammar are taught daily, with regular opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in a wide range of writing styles. Once more, all groups of pupils make good progress in this subject.
- You have moved away from teaching reading in groups. Pupils now have a daily reading lesson where teachers and teaching assistants promote pupils' comprehension and inference skills, as well as improving fluency in reading through focused questioning. Your progress information confirms that progress in this subject is speeding up. Pupils read with confidence and accuracy.
- The leaders of English and mathematics both coach and mentor other teachers and deliver regular training and support. They take full responsibility for developing the quality of teaching and pupil achievement.
- Governance has been strengthened. Almost all members, including the Chair of the Governing Body, joined after the last inspection. They have been recruited to make sure that they have the right skills, experience

and knowledge to bolster their effectiveness. Governors have a good insight into the school's performance, including how well the school performs compared to all schools nationally. They are rigorous in holding senior leaders fully to account for their work.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the rate of attendance improves for disadvantaged pupils so that it is at least in line with all pupils nationally.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Hillingdon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the assistant headteacher and the English and the mathematics leaders. Throughout the inspection I met with a total of four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I also held a discussion with the local authority representative and a group of pupils from all year groups. I listened to four pupils read from Years 3 and 6. I observed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the breakfast club before school and in lessons with you. I reviewed the school's school improvement plan and self-evaluation, checks for safeguarding pupils and records of pupils' progress.