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4 July 2019

Mrs Nicola Loten  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Loten

### **Short inspection of Neasden Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 July 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 command respect and are highly regarded by staff, pupils, parents and carers. Trust leaders also value the way you lead the school. Since the last inspection, you have continued to develop your leadership team. Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the strengths and priorities for improvement to ensure the further development of the school. You ensure that the members of your leadership team are experts in their areas of responsibility, resulting in leaders providing effective coaching for all staff.

You and your assistant headteacher have created a happy and friendly school where pupils and staff thrive. Your school motto, 'Aim high and reach for the sky,' permeates the school. One pupil told me that it means if you keep trying your best now, you will be even better when you are older. Governors are rightly proud of the varied curriculum offered to pupils. They ensure that additional funding is well spent. Together, you create a wealth of opportunities beyond the school day, whether this is music or sports clubs.

Pupils and parents who made their views known are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Typical comments by parents were about how happy their children are at school and that staff are very approachable. Pupils told me that Neasden is a friendly school. The strengths identified in pupils' behaviour found at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils are kind, polite and know who to talk to if there are any worries. Pupils told me that 'adults will sort things out' if they have any concerns.

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve how teachers identify spelling mistakes in pupils' work. Regular audits take place and spellings are consistently corrected. The teaching of spelling is now taught in a systematic way. You were also asked to move the most able pupils on more quickly in their work. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2018 have improved and are in line with pupils nationally.

Key stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics results in 2018, for attainment and progress, were much improved. However, leaders know that sustaining this attainment is an important next step.

The last inspection report also asked leaders to improve pupils' basic mathematics facts, so they can progress more quickly to complex calculations and solve mathematical problems. You have addressed this well. A new mathematics curriculum has significantly impacted on mathematical knowledge for all pupils. The positive effect of staff training on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary and fluency is clearly evident in pupils' books. Pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly. Work is adapted well to meet pupils' varying needs. Older pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Pupils are moved on to more challenging work quickly. Attainment in mathematics has risen. In Year 6 in 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was considerably above average, as was their progress. The proportion reaching the higher standard also improved considerably and was slightly above average.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They are meticulous in their record-keeping and procedures. Staff record any vulnerability concerns centrally. Leaders then use this information to seek advice. You are ably supported by your learning mentor, who ensures that pupils' emotional needs are met through daily 'check-ins'. As a result, vulnerable pupils are in school and the additional support some families need at home is quickly accessed.

Pupils' safety is paramount and their attendance levels are improving. Pupils who made their views known told me that they feel safe and that they learn about all aspects of safety, for example pedestrian safety on the local estate and how to keep safe online. Parents' responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, show that parents believe that their child feels safe and happy at your school. All staff and governors have received and read up-to-date documentation about safeguarding and child protection, so that they can protect pupils from harm. Designated safeguarding leads have impressive training records, highlighting the importance of safeguarding for all in school.

## Inspection findings

- In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of key stage 2 improved considerably in reading, writing and mathematics and was above average, especially in mathematics. An above-average proportion of pupils also reached the higher standards in writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' previous starting points. At the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in these subjects, although also improved, remained below average. Improvement in key stage 1 has not been as good as in key stage 2. During the inspection, therefore, I wanted to find out if children are getting off to a good start in the early years and current pupils are making good progress in key stage 1.
- Children start school in the early years with skills below typical for their age, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy. Your assistant headteacher and I visited the early years, seeing clear routines and high expectations of children. In Nursery, children are becoming increasingly independent. Adults have revised their approaches to teaching so that conversations with children are more focused. Adults model high expectations for children. In a Reception writing session, the teacher modelled correct letter formation and layout. Children responded by looking carefully at their work and making adjustments.
- Effective early years provision means that children's learning is getting off to a good start. Children are making good progress from their starting points. In 2018, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year improved and was much closer to average. The large majority of children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- In the last three years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check, although improving steadily, has remained below average. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 also improved in 2018 but, again, remained slightly below average. Therefore, I wanted to check whether the quality of teaching of phonics and early reading is good and check if current pupils are making good progress.
- Together, we observed a range of phonics sessions and I listened to several pupils read. The recent changes you have made to the teaching of phonics are paying off. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised. This is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning. In early years, teachers have strong subject knowledge and they model the correct letter sounds. Adults use assessment information effectively to ensure that children receive same-day additional support to practise the sounds they have learned. Opportunities for children to receive targeted support from adults have been increased. Similarly, in key stage 1, teachers regularly check on individual pupils' reading so that they spot any emerging issues and adapt future learning accordingly. As a result of the improvements made, achievement in reading in both of these key stages has improved.
- For the most part, across the school pupils read books that are carefully matched to their stage of development. Pupils in key stage 2 told me that they read a great range of books. They value the harder texts they hear in whole-class

reading and are keen to develop their reading so that they can read these texts independently. However, some lower-attaining children in early years and in key stage 1 lack confidence and fluency in being able to decode their books. They rely heavily on segmenting and blending. Opportunities to re-read familiar books to build these skills up are sometimes overlooked. Making sure that this is addressed is an important next step.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in early years and key stage 1, pupils re-read familiar books to develop confidence and fluency.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kingston upon Hull City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ian Clennan  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I observed teaching and learning and scrutinised examples of pupils' work, alongside both you and your leadership team. I met with you and senior leaders. I met with five governors. I also met with the chief executive officer and the school improvement leader for the multi-academy trust. I spoke with eight pupils in a discussion group and with pupils informally in lessons and around the school. I also listened to several pupils read.

I evaluated the 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and met with a group of parents. I also took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness; the school's development plans; and safeguarding documentation. I also considered information posted on the school's website.