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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Giovanna Phelan
Headteacher
Livingstone Primary and Nursery School
Baring Road
New Barnet
Barnet
Hertfordshire
EN4 9BU

Dear Mrs Phelan

Short inspection of Livingstone Primary and Nursery School

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 2018, 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 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your leadership team have developed a very inclusive school where all pupils can develop and thrive. You are successfully building the capacity of senior and middle leaders to improve the school even further.

Parents, carers and staff praise all aspects of the school's work. Parents who spoke with me and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire highlighted the pastoral care and support provided by the school as being particularly strong. Staff are equally proud to be part of the school and value your commitment and leadership. The school is an orderly community where pupils behave well and look after each other. Relationships are warm and based on mutual respect at all levels.

Governors know the school well and are highly committed. They are supportive but also challenge school leaders when they believe the school can do even better. Leaders and governors have accurately evaluated the school's performance to identify strengths and areas for development.

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment and progress have improved consistently in reading and mathematics over the last few years. As a result of greater analysis and assessment of individual pupils' needs, the majority of pupils now make very strong progress to achieve above-average standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, leaders

recognise that further work needs to be done to improve the attainment and progress of boys and the most able pupils in writing.

This is a school where leaders know each individual pupil's needs and abilities. As a result, all pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, are being well supported to achieve the best they can. One parent described being, 'overwhelmed by the inclusive provision'. Another parent said, 'All pupils value and learn so much from each other in this school.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding records comply with all statutory requirements and are fit for purpose. The single central record of checks on the suitability of staff is maintained to a high standard. I scrutinised case studies and these demonstrate how the school has taken decisive action to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils. The governors, including the designated safeguarding governors, are proactive in ensuring that safeguarding is effective. Training is kept up to date and ensures that staff have a good awareness of local issues within the community. Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding within the school.

Pupils told me how they keep safe online and say they all feel safe in school. Leaders have made good links with parents and carers as well as external agencies to help them best support any vulnerable pupils. Parents and pupils say that behaviour is at least good in the school and that instances of bullying are rare. This is because of the strong pastoral care and support systems that exist in the school.

Inspection findings

- We agreed at the start of the inspection to look at four key areas. The first line of enquiry related to how leaders are raising standards in the early years. This was because the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been below the national average for the previous three years.
- Children enter both the Nursery and the Reception Year with a wide range of abilities. Overall, children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. Children make strong progress in their reading and numeracy skills and are now mostly at age expectation by the time they leave the Reception Year. However, you acknowledge that writing skills, particularly for boys, need further development.
- Children in the specialist resource base who have SEN and/or disabilities make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress. These pupils are supported very well. They play a full part in all learning activities and the life of the school. Staff ensure that the early years environment is well resourced and attractive to enthuse children in their learning. The school has reviewed its recording and assessment systems to track and analyse progress more carefully. This information is now being shared with parents. Family learning workshops regularly take place, so parents can help their children's learning.

- Next, we looked at phonics outcomes and what leaders are doing to support disadvantaged pupils. This was because the proportion of disadvantaged pupils that attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below average for the last three years.
- We observed teaching in phonics and we also observed support staff teaching small groups of pupils, mainly those for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. While there is a systematic and structured approach to phonics in place, you are currently reviewing this provision. We saw some examples where pupils were not able to match the sounds to letters and apply this to their own writing. In these instances, the activities provided were not precise and were not matched well to pupils' abilities. Provisional school information shows that there is further work to do to raise attainment in phonics for all pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- You identified writing as a key school priority at the start of the inspection. We looked at pupils' writing in every class in the school and also in all the specialist resource bases. You have introduced a wide range of effective interventions to raise pupils' attainment in writing. You and your senior leaders have analysed assessment information well. You have worked effectively with staff to ensure that they know how to identify pupils' next steps accurately in order to improve their writing skills. In the Reception Year, we saw some children developing a cursive letter script. We saw other children learning to trace letters in sand and on paper. All activities were age appropriate and carefully selected. In learning journals and on display, we saw children beginning to use finger spaces to write simple sentences. In the Year 2 class, we saw pupils applying their writing skills to their own personal experiences and narratives. Pupils wrote with enthusiasm and at some length about a recent trip to the nearby woods and also a visit to the Jewish Museum in London.
- In key stage 2, pupils learn to develop their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. The school has placed an emphasis on building these skills in recent years. In both Years 3 and 4, pupils are writing in a wide range of genres. For example, we saw pupils retelling stories, writing Greek myths and creating emotive writing about various characters. Pupils were using resources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and word banks to extend their vocabulary. In Years 5 and 6, we saw some examples of imaginative and persuasive writing that was of a high standard. Pupils with complex needs were being well supported and were observed learning with their peers. They have access to the same-quality teaching and challenges available to all. The writing that we scrutinised in pupils' books was mostly of a good standard for the ages and abilities of the pupils. However, in some classes pupils were not given enough opportunities to apply the writing skills they had learned. The school recognises that there is more work to do to raise standards for boys and also for the most able in writing.
- Finally, we agreed to look at what action leaders are taking to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence in the school. Persistent absence has been high for some years. You and the governing body identified this as a key area for development. School leaders have worked in close partnership with the local authority on this aspect of the school's work. A detailed attendance action plan for 2018 is now in place and is proving to be effective. Leaders have made parents aware of the importance of attendance and the school has taken decisive action where necessary. A detailed study of records showed a significant reduction in persistent absence over the last

academic year. The school is now almost in line with the national average for attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- strategies for teaching phonics are consistently applied so that more pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pass the phonics screening check in Year 1
- they improve the attainment and progress of boys and the most able pupils in writing across the school.

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

Sean Flood

Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held discussions with you and other senior and middle leaders. I spoke with representatives from the local authority and held a meeting with five governors, including the chair. I spoke with pupils in class, in structured settings and informally. I also spoke to parents. I observed pupils' behaviour in class, in the playgrounds and as they moved around the school. I scrutinised pupils' work in a wide range of subjects. I heard readers across the school and spoke with pupils about the books they are reading. I made visits to all classes, alongside senior leaders. I examined the school's progress-tracking information and assessment records. A wide range of documentation related to safeguarding, welfare and attendance was scrutinised. I looked at behaviour and bullying incident logs. I considered the responses of 62 parents to Parent View and the responses of pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys and the school's own internal surveys.