

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk

10 November 2015

Robyn Bruce  
Headteacher  
Cubitt Town Junior School  
Manchester Road  
London  
E14 3NE

Dear Ms Bruce

### **Short inspection of Cubitt Town Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 October 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 June 2012.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You were appointed shortly before the previous inspection and your three assistant headteachers have all started their jobs since that time. Their appointments have enabled you to drive school improvement forward with enthusiasm and energy. You have used the additional leadership capacity well to provide training for staff and to make sure that pupils' progress remains the focus of everyone's work. You and your colleagues have used your expertise well to challenge and support teachers. Teachers value the fact that you and your senior colleagues lead by example, using your expertise to teach alongside them and to give clear advice and guidance.

You identified that pupils' aspirations were not sufficiently high and took action to address the issue. You have adapted the curriculum. There is now a greater emphasis given to developing pupils' curiosity and to the depth in which issues are considered. Attention has been given to ensuring that parents are able to support their children's learning at home. This has included the provision of courses in the Community House on the school site. These have improved parents' own literacy and numeracy skills. Some parents have gained qualifications and undertaken further study.

Since 2013, the proportions of pupils making the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics have risen significantly. In 2015, the proportions of pupils making expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average. Higher proportions of pupils than seen nationally reached the expected standard in reading and mathematics. The proportion reaching this standard in writing was below the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils making expected progress was above that of other pupils nationally. Although a small gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils in school and their peers remains, it has narrowed over the last three years, particularly in reading.

The report published following the previous inspection referred to the need to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. Ofsted no longer allocates grades to individual lessons as the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is of greater importance. You and your colleagues take a similar approach when judging the effectiveness of teaching, considering a range of criteria, to good effect. These include visiting lessons to carry out formal observations, making drop-in visits to lessons, reviewing pupils' work, listening to pupils' views and evaluating the numerical information you record about pupils' progress over time. The previous report also referred to the need to ensure that middle leaders fulfilled their roles and responsibilities well. Having established an effective senior leadership team, you have also tackled middle leadership, ensuring that subject leaders receive the support and guidance they need from senior leaders.

Your evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. You have rightly identified that pupils' writing is a weakness in comparison to their reading and mathematical skills. You have begun to tackle this effectively; you have adapted the curriculum so that the emphasis of teaching is on securing understanding rather than covering a wide range of work superficially. As a result, pupils are able to discuss their work in greater detail.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that safeguarding policies reflect the most recent requirements. They offer clear guidance to staff about the symptoms of abuse, the importance of being watchful and about the action they should take should they have any concerns. Systems for staff to record these are uncomplicated and effective. Pupils use the prominently displayed worry boxes to register any concerns they wish to share confidentially. Pupils have a good awareness of the measures that the school takes to keep them safe. They trust the adults in school and know who they would turn to if they needed help. Parents who completed the online survey and those spoken to during the inspection were unanimous in their agreement that their children feel safe in school. Leaders are mindful of the issues relating to radicalisation and have arranged for relevant training to be provided for parents and staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- Your work to raise pupils' aspirations has been successful. Pupils are beginning to have a much better appreciation of the value of education. One pupil explained that to achieve her ambition of becoming a veterinarian, she would need to achieve good results in her science examinations. Another explained in detail her planned route, through secondary and university education to future employment.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are actively involved, visiting school regularly to check that actions taken to improve provision are leading to the intended impact. Governors are linked to year groups. Half-termly meetings with year group leaders are used to carry out rigorous progress reviews. This gives the governing body a detailed insight into pupils' progress. Assessment information is used to hold leaders to account for the performance of different groups of pupils.
- The steps you have taken to improve writing have begun to have an impact. You have made sure that pupils have first-hand experiences so that they have a better understanding of the topics about which they write. For example, the recent trip to the London Eye helped to provide pupils with the vocabulary they needed to write high-quality mystery stories. Teachers know that in order for pupils to be able to write well, they first need to be able to express their thoughts orally. Consequently, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to explain their views and to speak what they will later write. Pupils' handwriting is not always their best and much is not joined or fluent. Although teachers occasionally challenge poor presentation, they do not always do so. Pupils' books demonstrate that due to the close attention writing receives, pupils are making good progress. Middle attaining pupils' writing sometimes lacks maturity. They sometimes overuse the techniques that they have been taught, which can lead to the meaning of their writing not being clear.
- Teachers choose engaging approaches to present learning. Numerous visits to places of interest and of educational value, as well as the use of practical resources, spark pupils' curiosity. A Year 6 pupil recalled with excitement what she had learnt the previous year through being involved in a role play about the trial of Macbeth.
- Teachers use their time during lessons well to check how well pupils have understood the intended learning. They give feedback there and then as well as writing comments in pupils' books after the lesson. Teachers identify targets for individual pupils, but these, combined with the overarching class targets and the comments teachers write in pupils' books, can sometimes give pupils too much to think about when completing their work.
- The roles of responsibility introduced since the last inspection have supported pupils' social and moral development well. Older pupils selected to act as librarians, playground buddies, prefects, sports leaders and school council members show great pride in undertaking their roles. They are clear about their responsibilities and adopt a mature approach to carrying them out.

- Recent training to keep pupils safe while using the internet has been effective. Pupils recall the videos they watched which highlighted the need for privacy settings to be used correctly when using social media applications.
- Teachers adopt a reflective approach to improving their practice. The support and training provided by leaders ensure that teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and of how pupils learn. This leads to a more thorough evaluation of pupils' learning and a better understanding of how best to help them make progress. Of the staff who were working at the school at the time of the previous inspection, all those who completed the staff questionnaire agreed that the school has improved.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of pupils make rapid progress from their starting points so that they exceed the expected standard in writing
- expectations of pupils' presentation are consistently high.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders, teachers and the Chair of the Governing Body. I held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and with the vice chair of the governing body. I considered the views of the parents I met at the start of the school day and those expressed in the 10 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. I made short visits to seven lessons, all jointly with either the headteacher or an assistant headteacher, to observe teaching and learning. I scrutinised a selection of pupils' writing from across the school. I held a meeting with a group of pupils, had conversations with others in the playground at lunchtime and spoke with some about their learning, during visits to lessons. I considered the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire. I reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding and to the school's own evaluation of its work.