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Amanda Somerwill  
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Dear Mrs Somerwill

### **Short inspection of Kenton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 June 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. Senior leaders, including the governors and staff, share your strong commitment to school improvement. Within a united team, you are all very clear about your roles in helping all pupils to achieve their best.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They demonstrate courtesy and respect to visitors and cooperate very supportively in lessons to help each other learn. During my visit, all pupils were focused effectively on learning.

There is some variance in the views expressed by parents, but most are happy with the school and would recommend it to other parents.

At the previous inspection, the school was asked to quicken the pace of pupils' learning in lessons and make sure that pupils know how to improve their work. You have used the close federated partnership with Kenn Church of England Primary School to share and develop staff expertise. In particular, staff have strengthened their ability to assess pupils' skills and plan learning activities that meet pupils' different needs. By so doing, you have increased the capacity of staff to tackle these issues effectively and bring about improvement.

The previous inspection also identified the need to increase the focus placed on developing pupils' writing and mathematical skills. You have also tackled these

areas effectively. For example, you have liaised well with the local authority and other schools to provide additional staff training to develop teaching and raise pupils' outcomes. As a result, teaching and learning in mathematics have improved across the school.

Teachers' raised expectations and skills have also helped pupils to write more imaginatively and expressively. You recognise that strengthened teaching in key stage 1 needs further embedding to ensure that more pupils with the potential to do so attain at a high standard in writing and mathematics. You and other leaders also appreciate that although pupils' handwriting is developing, it is not taught and developed consistently and effectively across the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and members of the governing body ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. These include, for example, full recruitment checks and regular and up-to-date training for staff. Records also show that leaders and staff act swiftly and effectively, including as necessary with outside agencies, to address any concerns relating to the safety or welfare of pupils. As a result, all those who work at the school sustain a strong culture of safeguarding that keeps pupils safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that behaviour has been much improved in recent terms. Pupils know how to stay safe. They show genuine consideration for each other's needs and help each other to keep safe. For example, they understand and adhere sensibly to the rules about playing ball games safely in the school's small playground. Pupils told me that if they had a problem they would have no hesitation in telling an adult because they would help and sort it out straight away.

The large majority of parents are happy with the support and guidance given by the school. As one parent wrote: 'I feel my children are in the best hands where they are not only being taught well, but also cared for and are very safe.'

### **Inspection findings**

- My first line of enquiry during this inspection examined the steps taken to secure good achievement by boys during their year in Reception. This is because the proportion of boys reaching a good level of development in 2016 was below that found nationally.
- You and other leaders have considered this aspect carefully. You have identified that boys often enter the school with typically lower levels of skill than those typical for their age, especially in writing and confidence in learning.
- You have addressed these aspects particularly effectively in recent terms. New developments have included widening the range of experiences to improve the children's engagement in learning and to develop their fine and gross motor skills. For example, boys as well as girls now engage equally effectively and enthusiastically in activities such as 'bug hunts', 'water painting' and role play with toy cars, which develop these skills. Subsequently, the children's improved

fine and gross motor skills enhance their mark-making, writing and number skills. Currently, an above-average proportion of boys as well as girls demonstrate a good level of development and readiness to continue future learning in Year 1.

- The inspection's second line of enquiry investigated what leaders have done to raise outcomes for pupils in writing and mathematics, especially at greater depth, by the end of key stage 1. This is because a below-average proportion of pupils attained at a high standard in these aspects in recent years.
- This academic year, you have strategically moved teachers into different classes to make better use of their expertise and have enlisted the assistance of outside specialists to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. These actions are beginning to raise standards in key stage 1.
- A scrutiny of the written work of current pupils reveals that they are now making typically good progress in developing their grammar and punctuation skills. Pupils are also making better use of their well-taught phonic skills to spell common words with increasing accuracy. Teachers are now placing an increasing emphasis on developing pupils' handwriting. However, pupils' ability to write at greater length and depth is still too often constrained by a lack of fluency in their handwriting, and this restricts their progress.
- Pupils' work in mathematics shows a more rapid pace of improvement. Pupils respond well to the teacher's more focused emphasis on the meanings of mathematical terms and demonstrate good progress when explaining their strategies. You recognise, though, that this emphasis has not been in place long enough to fully deepen the understanding of those pupils with the most ability.
- The third line of enquiry examined why pupils' outcomes in key stage 2 national tests in 2016 in reading and mathematics were not as high as those in writing. In particular, we explored what leaders and teachers have been doing to improve boys' progress in reading and mathematics in this key stage.
- Leaders and teachers have worked effectively to secure pupils' good progress in these subjects. As in key stage 1, increased sharing of staff expertise, additional training and redeployment of staff have secured consistently good and better teaching across this key stage. This is particularly the case in mathematics, where teachers' raised expectations and the increased emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of mathematical language are deepening their understanding.
- Pupils' reading skills are also being developed well, with most pupils now making at least good progress from their different starting points. In particular, boys benefit well from increased opportunities to read, talk and write about texts that stimulate their interest. For example, pupils across the range of abilities in Years 5 and 6 responded enthusiastically to the teacher's questions and demonstrated good comprehension skills when describing a child's feelings when surrounded by polar bears. As in key stage 1, though, underdeveloped handwriting skills limit the ability of some pupils to write more fluently and confidently.
- The final line of enquiry examined pupils' attendance and what you have been doing to reduce persistent absence. You and the governors have worked closely with outside agencies and parents to deal effectively with complex issues concerning a very small number of pupils, including some leading to exclusion. As

a result, most pupils continue to attend well and persistent absence is much reduced.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils in key stage 1 develop their mathematics and writing skills further so that a higher proportion of them attain greater depth within the standard
- there is a more consistent and effective approach to the teaching of handwriting 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 Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and with the other staff with leadership responsibilities. I met with members of the governing body and held a separate meeting with a representative of the local authority. I visited classrooms with you and together we scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. I talked with individual staff during visits to classrooms and with pupils and support staff during the morning break. In addition, I examined a range of documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' attendance, progress and school self-evaluation and development. I took account of 25 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and additional parents' written comments. I also took note of 10 responses to the staff questionnaire and responses from 23 pupils to their questionnaire.