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Ms Clare Woodward
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Woodward

Short inspection of The Queen Boudica Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 September 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 June 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Your school is a safe and happy learning environment. The purpose-built modern school building is well equipped and lies at the heart of the local community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and your staff have great confidence in you as senior leaders. Staff who completed the online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the provision and morale appears to be high.

This positive view of the school is shared by the majority of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. One parent wrote, 'The management of the school is strong and the senior leadership team works cohesively together.' This view was borne out when I met with you as a group at the start of the inspection. You are confident and competent leaders who understand the school's strengths and the challenges it still has to overcome.

You demonstrate your good understanding of the school through the quality of your self-evaluation summary document and the good quality of your school improvement planning documentation. You have accurately evaluated the quality of the provision and have rightly identified key priority areas in order to address any weaknesses. Systems are in place for senior leaders and governors to regularly check on progress made against the actions taken, and to evaluate their impact on school improvement. Between them, the governors have a wide range of knowledge

and the experience to hold you to account.

My meeting with your middle leaders demonstrates that they are well equipped to play their part in meeting the challenges you face. Although some of these colleagues have new roles, and some are quite new to their posts, they share a tangible commitment to making the school better. They feel empowered and are clear about their contribution and personal impact in promoting school improvement.

Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. You have never had to permanently exclude any pupils since the school opened. Bullying is extremely rare although when it does occur, pupils told me they know who to report it to and are confident that it will be dealt with effectively. You have ensured that pupils have an in-depth understanding of cyber bullying, as well as the dangers associated with the use of the internet. You actively work with parents so that they can play their part in keeping their children safe when at home.

My discussion with pupils shows that they appreciate the teaching they receive and feel they are given many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They particularly like their new library and the opportunities they are given to read in lessons and while at home. They have a clear understanding of the school's values and can link these closely to fundamental British values. They also have a very good understanding about the school's namesake, Queen Boudica, and told me in great detail about what she stood for, and the challenges she faced leading up to her ultimate demise.

Pupils' outcomes since the previous inspection have demonstrated many strengths in both key stages 1 and 2. For example, progress made by all pupils at the end of key stage 2 has been above average in reading, writing and in mathematics. However, when a new system for assessing pupils' progress was introduced in 2016, coupled with the raising of expectations, the number of previously identified strengths declined. Your most recent outcomes for 2017 show that some gains have been made. Key stage 1 outcomes show an improvement across all areas. Pupils in key stage 2 improved in their reading and writing, with a slight dip in mathematics. The proportion of pupils in key stage 2 reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. You are aware that a greater focus is necessary to ensure that your most able pupils achieve as well as they should. Children in early years made good progress towards national expectations in 2017 from low starting points.

The previous inspection identified a number of areas for improvement which you have largely addressed over time.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to develop senior leaders' use of achievement information so that they were in a better position to support the improvement of teaching and pupils' outcomes. Your senior and middle leaders now have an improved understanding of achievement information and use this to challenge teachers regularly at pupil progress meetings. They know which groups

perform well and which groups could achieve better. This helps them to intervene earlier when a pupil is at risk of underachieving.

The previous inspection also suggested you improve teachers' use of data when planning for learning and that they guide pupils better about the next steps to take in their learning. The same inspection also suggested teachers check more regularly that pupils understand what they are learning and that they are given adequate time to read and act on their teachers' comments in their books. My scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that they are aware of the different needs of pupils and plan their lessons with these needs in mind, but the provision for the most able pupils could be sharper. My review of pupils' work shows that teachers implement your marking and assessment policy and that time is given over to pupils so that they are able to consider their teachers' comments and respond to additional challenges provided for them. During my observations of teaching, I witnessed teachers checking that pupils understood what they were learning through their well-targeted questioning.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding children is a strong aspect of the school's work. All staff have received and read the latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016), and demonstrated a strong awareness of safeguarding issues. All staff have also undergone training in the government's 'Prevent' duty. Staff, including those who join the school mid-year, receive up-to-date training on safeguarding matters. The school's record of recruitment checks of the suitability of staff is compliant with current requirements.

Records kept by the school of children who are at risk of abuse or neglect, or who are deemed to be vulnerable, are very well maintained and informative. Records are kept securely and show clearly how concerns have been resolved. Appropriate external agencies are informed as and when necessary.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my lines of enquiry was to consider whether the changes in senior leadership over a short period of time had had a negative impact on sustaining school improvement. This was because the previous headteacher had resigned with effect from July 2016. The current deputy headteacher served as acting headteacher until the end of December 2016 and then you took up the permanent post in January 2017.
- There is no evidence to suggest that the school's progress had stalled before a permanent headteacher was appointed. The local authority and the governing body ensured that the acting headteacher was very well supported by an experienced headteacher of a local school. You joined the school as an experienced headteacher yourself, and used your time wisely to evaluate what was working well and what changes needed to be made.
- You have remodelled the senior leadership team, having considered the skills of each team member so that their roles play to strengths. You have also created a

role for a senior member of staff who brings with him valuable experience of assessing pupils' progress. This member of staff has already carried out a thorough analysis of pupils' progress, including different groups, and shared this with his senior colleagues. The next stage is to roll this out to all teachers and teaching assistants.

- My next line of enquiry was to investigate whether teaching is meeting the needs of the school's most able pupils. This was because my initial analysis of your most recent outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 showed that this group of pupils could do better.
- Your improvement planning rightly takes account of the fact that, while outcomes for the most able pupils who work at greater depth have increased in reading, they have stayed stable in writing and dipped in mathematics. You acknowledge that a whole-school focus is necessary to ensure that a greater proportion of your most-able pupils make better progress. In mathematics in particular, while you have been successful in teaching calculation skills, further work is required in mastering mathematical concepts and in reasoning skills.
- I also looked at how successful your strategies are to improve the progress of the disadvantaged pupils in the school. The difference between the achievement of these pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally has not diminished sufficiently.
- You use your pupil premium funding on a wide range of activities including one-to-one support and employing the services of external agencies to raise pupils' self-esteem. Governors hold you to account well, through their committees, to evaluate the impact of the pupil premium. While your strategies are enabling this group of pupils to make gains in their learning by the time they reach the end of key stage 2, more work is required to diminish any differences between them and their non-disadvantaged classmates lower down the school. You have successfully brought the attendance of this group of pupils in line with their peers.
- My final line of enquiry was to consider how successful you are in ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the few pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, attend school more regularly.
- Overall attendance at the school in 2016 was 96.5%. However, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attend less regularly than their peers and this has been an ongoing challenge for the school. You presented a plausible explanation for some of the absences, linked to medical circumstances. You make good use of two of your learning support assistants, who are also trained nurses, to work with these vulnerable pupils. You also have plans in place to address this matter through your 'thrive' programme, which aims to ensure that these pupils achieve their potential. However, this programme is not yet established, so it is difficult to measure its impact. Improving the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remains a priority for the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- training for teachers on the use of data is ongoing, with the particular aim of providing greater stretch and challenge for the most able pupils, particularly in mathematics
- the differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged classmates diminish more rapidly in key stage 1
- pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who have an education, health and care plan attend school more regularly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Essex. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and other senior leaders, as well as a group of middle leaders, to discuss progress since the previous inspection. I met with the chair and two other members of the governing body to gain their views on the school. I also met with a representative of the local authority.

I scrutinised a variety of sources of information, including your self-evaluation summary document, the school's plans for improvement, and assessment information for all year groups. I held a meeting to examine the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children, and information relating to attendance.

I undertook observations of learning across the school, viewed work in pupils' books, and spoke with pupils about their learning when visiting lessons. I took account of the views of 19 staff who responded to the online survey. I also considered the 60 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.