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Ms Geraldine Santiago  
Headteacher  
Blanche Nevile School  
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Dear Ms Santiago

### **Short inspection of Blanche Nevile School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 2017 with Teresa Neary, Ofsted Inspector, 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 October 2012.

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

Despite significant staff changes, the leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You were new to post in September 2017 and a new chair of governors was appointed in January 2016. Since then, the governing body has strengthened and is now better equipped at monitoring finance, safeguarding and deaf education. Governors provide an effective balance of support and challenge for the new leadership team because they have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has enabled standards to be maintained throughout this period of change.

Since September 2017 you have restructured your leadership team to allow for a better focus on pupil outcomes, and established more consistency around measuring pupil progress. Staff feel strongly that the school has improved since the last inspection and almost all staff are proud of the school. Parents are also pleased with the improvements. As one parent said: 'The new headteacher understands parents' needs.'

Leaders and other staff have created a vibrant community with lively displays designed to support pupils' learning and communication. Pupils were excited to share their thoughts with me about the difference the school had made to their lives. One pupil was able to talk confidently about how the school had helped her with English grammar, and others were able to discuss not only how important it was to learn English, but the challenges they faced in learning a second language. Parents are also pleased with the support their children receive. For example, one

parent said: 'The school has done wonders for my daughter. They put me at ease. I always know what is expected of her.'

Although pupils' outcomes are strong overall, there are some variations in pupils' achievements in writing, particularly between different key stages. You have already identified this as an area for development and measures are in place to diminish any differences in pupil progress.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Because safeguarding is your highest priority, leaders and governors have been able to establish a safe culture throughout the school. You meet weekly with the chair of governors and safeguarding is always discussed. All staff receive appropriate training and are clear about their responsibilities around keeping children safe. Fortnightly safeguarding conversations in staff briefings include learning from high profile cases, and keep staff alert to risks in your own school and the local community. Pupils are also clear about what to do if they feel unsafe.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. This inspection focused on the impact of new leaders' actions, including governors, pupils' outcomes in English, particularly in writing, and how well the curriculum meets pupils' needs and prepares them for the next stage of their education.
- Recent strategic changes to the school aimed at raising standards and improving consistency illustrate effective governance and leadership. You have begun to develop the role of middle leaders to ensure that the school has the capacity to match your ambitious drive and vision. However, this is not fully established. Middle leaders are developing their work to improve outcomes for all key stages and groups of pupils. You are in the process of moving to a new assessment system to support leaders' analysis of pupils' progress over time. We agreed that these are key priorities for the school at this time.
- Leaders and staff have continued to develop the school's bilingual and bicultural aspects, and responded well to the challenges of working with pupils who are not only learning two languages, British sign language and English, but who also have additional learning needs.
- Progress in mathematics is rapid and sustained, particularly in number. However, pupils' progress is variable in English. English is a second language for most of your pupils and a particular challenge for deaf pupils. Leaders recognise this, and have responded by applying effective strategies from the primary department across the whole school. The pupils with whom I spoke had a sophisticated understanding of how challenging it can be to learn two languages with different sentence structures. They were proud of their achievements in this area.
- All staff contribute to the ongoing professional dialogue about pupils' learning. This has enabled staff to identify pupils who are at risk of not meeting their

targets and put interventions in place. As a member of support staff told me: 'No child is ever left behind.'

- We saw many good examples of staff encouraging pupils to reflect on their learning and develop independence, including in British sign language sessions.
- Additional adults are skilled at supporting pupils' learning and emotional needs. Staff promote pupils' communication skills well, and encourage resilience and independence through a range of effective strategies.
- You offer a broad and balanced curriculum, including four key stage 4 pathways that prepare pupils well for later life and the wider community. One parent told me that she was proud of her daughter's achievements and described how she now had the skills to be able to go on to be a games designer in a mainstream college. All pupils leave the school to go on to further education or training.
- Pupils are well-rounded individuals because they are taught to develop their understanding of deaf issues and their place in the wider community. They learn the importance of being tolerant of the others, and are keen to help the pupils they join for inclusion lessons understand what being deaf means. One pupil told me that being a pupil at the school has enabled her to feel 'comfortable with hearing communities'. Another pupil felt that the school has enabled her to be 'confident, proud and assertive' and she is now able to 'use sign language in front of hearing people'. Opportunities for inclusion are approached sensitively and are valued by both pupils and parents. Pupils spoke of going at their own pace and not being pushed.
- You and your team are highly aware of the vulnerability of your pupils. You continue to strengthen measures to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils are taught how to stay safe in the community and online, and know what to do if there is a problem. All staff who responded to the survey felt that pupils are well looked after at school. To keep children safe outside of school, all parents are encouraged to learn British sign language so that they can communicate with pupils and understand conversations between their children and other adults. In addition, leaders have used their detailed knowledge of local safeguarding issues to tailor provision, for example by adapting travel training to help pupils deal with potential risks in the area.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school has a consistent approach to assessment and that the new assessment procedures continue to strengthen pupils' outcomes
- the role of middle leaders is further developed to maximise progress for all pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Francis McDonald-Gonzalez  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, the inspection team held a number of meetings with you and other senior leaders. You accompanied the inspectors on a series of short visits to lessons. The inspection team held discussions with different leaders about safeguarding, the curriculum, removing barriers to learning, and measuring pupils' progress. Meetings were held with the chair of governors and five other governors. Meetings were also held with a group pupils and a parent. The inspection team worked with senior leaders to scrutinise pupils' work and pupils' progress information. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation. This included the improvement plan, attendance data, records of pupils' progress and behaviour, and evidence of records to keep pupils safe. The 34 responses to the staff survey and nine responses to Parent View were also considered.