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Ms Anne Cox
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Cox

Short inspection of Queen's Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 May 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 have a strong vision that the school should be highly inclusive and serve your locality well. Recent expansion has resulted in a diverse range of pupil backgrounds, and leaders are determined that all pupils and their families are welcomed into the school community. You have relaunched the school ethos as 'Be respectful, be responsible and be safe', which has been embraced by pupils. Pupils told me, 'People are kind here and we are a community.' One teacher said, 'We really care about the children and our school is a sanctuary.' A parent remarked, 'I like the mix of children at the school, with families from all different backgrounds.'

After a dip in performance in 2016, you and your senior staff wasted no time in finding out how to improve the school quickly. Working closely and effectively with the local authority and the local network of headteachers, leaders pooled expertise to rectify shortcomings in teaching and learning.

Results in 2017 showed that this work has been successful, with pupils making progress in reading, writing and mathematics close to national averages. Nevertheless, leaders are not complacent and know that there is work to do to improve standards further.

Self-evaluation is accurate, as leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development. Most areas requiring improvement from the last inspection have been

tackled successfully, including improving the quality of teaching. Parents and carers say their child is taught well.

Leaders identify that the effectiveness of behaviour management is an area to improve. This is because the school demographic change means that there are increasing numbers of pupils with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs joining the school. Pupils say that most of their peers are well behaved and, if a classmate needs help with their behaviour, adults are 'kind and sort it out'. Teachers I spoke with reflected on the new policy and said, 'We now have a culture of positivity.' During the inspection, pupils behaved very well and showed respect towards adults and each other. The staff response to the online questionnaire shows that the new way of working regarding behaviour management is not yet embedded across all members of the school community. A member of staff who said in their questionnaire response that 'staff need more support and training' confirms your view that the management of pupils' complex behavioural needs continues to be a key priority area to work on.

Governors carry out their role in ensuring that the school follows statutory guidelines well. They visit the school regularly to see the school for themselves and meet pupils, staff and parents. Governors receive headteacher reports that have recently provided additional helpful analysis so that governors can ask searching questions about trends and patterns in pupils' attendance. Governors are currently undertaking staff and parent surveys so that they can strengthen communication and receive views directly for consideration.

The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school and the education their child receives. Almost all parents would recommend the school to others. Out of many positive comments from parents responding to the online questionnaire, one said: 'I highly recommend Queens Park's School and can confirm my daughter has had a great experience there and is achieving well.'

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding that permeates the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and successfully implemented. The school's records show that all concerns about pupils are rigorously followed up in a timely manner. Leaders seek the support of other agencies when appropriate to ensure the safety of the pupils in their care. Staff have regular training so that they are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe from risks such as radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.

Pupils say that their school is a safe place and they feel well cared for. They say that bullying is extremely rare and that, should there be any friendship issues, they get sorted out quickly. The vast majority of parents responding to the questionnaire say their child is safe at the school.

Inspection Findings

- The focus of this inspection was to investigate specific areas of the school's provision, including the progress of pupils in mathematics across key stages, leadership of pupils' attendance and the effectiveness of communication with parents.
- Teachers say they have recently honed their teaching skills in mathematics through helpful professional development and shared discussion with colleagues in other schools. Pupils learn well as they receive opportunities to solve real-life number problems and investigate mathematical patterns and trends. Pupils take a pride in their work and they say they enjoy learning in mathematics.
- Occasionally, the most able pupils are not consistently provided with difficult work in mathematics. Teachers state 'our pupils love a challenge.' However, pupils say they would like to be provided with even more challenge. One pupil said, 'We shouldn't get so much help so we can do the work for ourselves.' Typically, pupils make good gains in mathematics, although most-able pupils are not making quite as much progress as they could.
- Leaders have focused well on improving provision and outcomes in the early years. Children's work shows that they make great gains in mark-making and early writing skills. Teachers know the next steps children should make in their phonics and writing to accelerate progress. However, there is not as much evidence for such high rates of progress in children's mathematical skills. While staff keep a close eye on children's exploration of shape, space and measurement, teachers and leaders do not monitor children's progress in number and counting sharply enough.
- Attendance is improving but remains just below the national average. Staff take great care to understand the barriers to good attendance. They support vulnerable pupils and their families well. There are individual case studies of improved attendance and, in line with the school's positive ethos, gains are celebrated and pupils are rewarded. You now provide more detailed analysis of attendance. This helps governors provide useful challenge to identify trends and evaluate the impact of any initiatives to reduce absence rates. However, it is too early to see the results of this sharper focus and attendance remains stubbornly below average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they build on the good work already done to improve the progress of most-able pupils in mathematics
- they continue to improve levels of pupils' attendance, evaluating trends and the impact of actions taken
- they embed the new behaviour policy across the whole school community.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Child
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your deputy headteacher, a group of staff, the inclusion coordinator, the mathematics coordinator, the attendance officer and a teaching assistant. I held a conference call with four members of the governing body, including the chair. I met a representative from the local authority.

I spoke with pupils in lessons and held a meeting with eight others. I also took account of 26 responses to the pupil questionnaire. I observed learning with you in six classes. I scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and in a sample of mathematics books across Years 1 to 6. I looked at children's work in the early years foundation stage and online evidence records. I observed pupils at breaktime.

I took account of 55 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire and a further nine written responses. I also took account of 31 responses to the staff questionnaire.

I analysed a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' achievement and attendance, safeguarding checks, policies and minutes from governors' meetings.