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Mr Spencer Clayton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Spencer Clayton

### **Short inspection of Queenswell Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 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 Queenswell Junior School was judged to be good in January 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, the governors and leaders have continued to strengthen the school, particularly through the building of a rich curriculum. Pupils told me that they enjoy mathematics, music, art and physical education (PE). Displays across the school suggest that the quality of art work and PE is of a high standard. There have been few changes in staffing and pupils benefit from additional support provided by senior leaders and teaching assistants. As a result, Year 6 pupils' achievement at Queenswell Junior School in reading and mathematics is well above the national averages. You recognise that pupils' progress and attainment in writing are not as high as you would like.

#### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire and free text would recommend the school to others. Additionally, three parents wrote letters to me praising the school. Parents commented on how their children feel safe and supported in school and appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities that are available to them. The vast majority of parents said that their children are happy at the school.

There is a clear culture of safeguarding that is promoted strongly by school leaders. Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All pre-employment checks for adults working at the school meet statutory requirements. Induction for new staff always starts with safeguarding. The appropriate sharing of

information between leaders is managed extremely well. Highly effective systems are firmly established for ensuring that pupils' safety and well-being are central to the work of the school. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that outside agencies fulfil their responsibilities in supporting vulnerable and at-risk pupils; this work is a strength and is seen as pivotal to keeping pupils safe. Systems for identifying, recording and reporting any concerns relating to pupils' safety and well-being are systematic, rigorous and understood by all staff. Training for staff is matched well to the particular needs of individuals. Leaders demonstrate a sound understanding of the local community and its needs.

Pupils develop a good understanding of how they can keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. The curriculum supports pupils' personal and social development and their ability to keep themselves safe, for example in workshops with the NSPCC and in teaching the 'Underwear Rule'. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 tackle difficult issues, such as the dangers of gang culture and female genital mutilation. Pupils say that the school is friendly. They are proud of their school and said that they enjoy their learning.

This is a happy and inclusive school, where pupils thrive because of your commitment to their development and well-being. One Year 5 pupil remarked: 'The best thing is that the school is open and friendly.'

## **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed four areas of focus. The first of these was to look at the impact of leaders' actions in improving pupils' progress in writing, particularly for higher-attaining pupils and disadvantaged pupils. This was chosen because, in 2017, progress in writing was in line with national figures, but not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to further improve writing, and it is a focus for the school's work this year. Team teaching with the subject leader has increased the level of consistency of the teaching of writing across the school. Staff value this immensely. The profile of writing has been raised by the competitions run by the 'children's parliament'.
- There are rich opportunities in the wider curriculum for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding to aid their writing. For example, in Year 3, pupils used the 'Moon Man', linked to their art work, to help them write diary entries and persuasive texts. However, pupils' standards of writing in the wider curriculum are not as high as the writing lessons. Opportunities to apply their writing skills in extended pieces are not as developed as they could be in these subjects. In our book scrutiny, we all found that extended pieces of writing, applying the skills that pupils had learned, were rare.
- When teachers were explicit with appropriate writing objectives, for example the diary entries for 'Germans in the Woods', the work was of a high standard. Where learning objectives were ambiguous, the quality was not as good. Typically, pupils make secure progress in their writing from their starting points. However, most-able pupils did not receive many tasks that gave them challenge.

- Our second focus was to explore how leaders improved the quality of teacher, learning and assessment in mathematics to secure the high attainment and progress scores in 2017, which were all above national averages. Leaders prioritise the development of pupils' number skills and calculation, which gives them confidence in their mathematics ability. Many pupils told me that mathematics was their favourite subject, even when they felt challenged.
- Pupils are encouraged to share strategies and discuss their work. Year 6 pupils skilfully tackle problem-solving involving percentages. Staff show strong subject knowledge and questioning skills that extend pupils' thinking. Leaders identify pupils requiring additional support in mathematics and staff are deployed effectively to meet their needs. As a result, pupils in some targeted groups in maths make exceptional progress.
- The next focus of the inspection was to explore how leaders continue to improve the overall attendance across the school and reduce levels of persistent absence for particular groups. You acknowledge that the attendance of some groups of pupils was too low and leaders work tirelessly to tackle poor attendance. You provide support for families and have a rigorous system to challenge persistent absence, for example 'Cuppa in the Cabin'. Governors closely monitor attendance and the strategies used to support families. As a result, attendance is improving for these groups, and across the school it is now below the national average for persistent absence.
- My final line of enquiry focused on leaders' and governors' evaluation of the impact of their actions to improve students' behaviour, and whether these reduced levels of fixed-term exclusions. Respectful, polite pupils played sensibly with their friends and reported that the playground is a friendly, fun place. Self-assured 'peer mentors' and members of the 'children's parliament' led the act of collective worship, which launched a new idea of the 'buddy bench'. The peer mentors have a measurable impact on reducing low-level incidents on the playground. Pupils moved safely and sensibly around the school site.
- In lessons, pupils collaborate well with their peers, displaying excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils know that their learning will not be disrupted. Strong working relationships exist with all staff, and pupils report that they will gladly speak to any adult should there be a problem.
- Governors visit regularly and speak knowledgeably about the pupils' confidence and good behaviour. The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a greater proportion of the school's most-able pupils, including the most-able disadvantaged pupils, make as much progress in writing at key stage 2 as they do in reading and mathematics
- writing throughout the curriculum should reflect the same high standard as the written work in English lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Lucy Nutt  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Information about the inspection. During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the mathematics and English leaders. I met with the school administrator, the child and family support worker and the attendance officer. I met with six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. I considered the 46 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and reviewed the 45 free-text comments from parents. I also read three letters that were sent in from parents giving their views. Together with you and the core subject leaders, I visited all classrooms to observe learning, speak to pupils and look at work in books. I spoke with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime and observed their behaviour at lunchtime in the playground. I scrutinised information about pupils' progress during the last academic year. I considered other documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school improvement plan and the school's website. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures, including policies and checks on staff employed in the school, and checked the school's website. I also analysed the range of views expressed by 18 staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire about the school.