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Jane Harris  
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Dear Ms Harris

### **Short inspection of Edinburgh Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 May 2018 with David Bryant, 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 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You and your leadership team have provided stability for the community during a period of change, including fluctuation in the number of pupils admitted to the school. Together with staff, you have created a warm and nurturing school ethos, centred on ensuring that pupils' development is well catered for. Pupils told inspectors that the school 'feels like a family' and that 'teachers are kind and always make sure we feel safe and happy'. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning, which is reflected in their regular attendance. Parents and carers too praise the school's caring and supportive atmosphere. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, would recommend the school.

You have overseen a number of improvements since the previous inspection. Across the school, standards in reading, including phonics, have increased. In 2017, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was broadly similar to the national average. Pupils also make good gains in their mathematics skills and knowledge and typically attain as well as their peers in other schools. However, leaders have not done enough to secure improvements in pupils' writing outcomes in key stage 2. This was an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For the last three years, Year 6 pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been significantly below national figures. In two out of the last three years, disadvantaged pupils also made below-average progress. Although improving, outcomes for current pupils in key stage 2 remain too

uneven. Leaders have not ensured that teaching routinely challenges pupils to achieve the standard of which they are capable. This is particularly the case for those pupils who start key stage 2 with average attainment.

Governors bring a range of relevant skills and experience to their roles. They care about the school and want pupils to do well. However, leaders and governors are overgenerous in their evaluation of the school's effectiveness. While they have a sound awareness of the areas that need to be better, they have not challenged each other on whether their work is securing the necessary improvements in pupils' writing outcomes. Similarly, governors have not held leaders to account with sufficient rigour on whether the pupil premium funding is spent well. This has hindered leaders from maintaining a sharp focus on the areas that need to improve.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your staff make sure that pupils feel safe and are kept safe at school. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare, behaviour is good and teachers sort any disagreements quickly. The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to develop an age-appropriate awareness of the steps they can take to keep themselves safe. This includes when they use the internet or are travelling to and from school. For example, Year 6 pupils attended a 'bikeability' course to help them know how to ride a bike sensibly and safely. Leaders ensure that pupils' emotional well-being and mental health are not overlooked. Pupils who experience difficulties benefit from well-targeted support from learning mentors and a counselling service. The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agreed that their children are safe, happy and well looked after.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are tenacious in their work to promote pupils' welfare. They have established a culture of vigilance across the school, underpinned by regular training for staff. This means that staff have the skills and knowledge they need to fulfil their duties to keep pupils safe. Leaders and staff share a comprehensive understanding of different risks to pupils' welfare and the signs they need to look out for, including those related to radicalisation and female genital mutilation. High-quality safeguarding records show that staff report any concerns that arise promptly. Leaders respond effectively by monitoring pupils' welfare and making timely and appropriate referrals to external agencies. Governors contribute well to the school's strong culture of safeguarding. They meet leaders regularly to check that arrangements are fit for purpose.

### **Inspection findings**

- For my first line of enquiry, we agreed to focus on the impact of leaders' work to improve pupils' writing outcomes in key stage 2. For the last three years, the progress of Year 6 pupils in key stage 2 has been much lower than that of their peers in other schools.
- You and your team have made raising standards in writing across the school a priority. Leaders have ensured that teaching now provides pupils with regular opportunities to practise different styles of writing, both in English and in other

subjects. When planning tasks, teachers give consideration to resources and topics that will enthuse pupils about writing. For example, Year 6 pupils were keen to apply their writing skills to write the script for an audio guide to a museum. Teachers check that pupils understand the main features of different types of non-fiction and fiction genres and incorporate these features into their own work. As a result, pupils are able to adapt their writing style and vocabulary to reflect the purpose and the audience they are writing for.

- These improvements are beginning to make a positive difference to the quality of pupils' writing, particularly in Year 6, where standards are rising. However, improvements are inconsistent across Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils are capable of more. School assessment information shows that a large proportion of pupils are not making the progress leaders would expect, particularly in Years 3 and 4. In these year groups, work in pupils' books shows that they have gaps in important basic grammar, spelling and punctuation skills. These gaps mean that pupils struggle to write at the standard expected for their age. Leaders recognise that this is the case. However, they have not taken sufficient steps to ensure that teaching gives due weight to the development of pupils' basic writing skills.
- Pupils' handwriting is also a barrier to their producing writing at the standard of which they are capable. Pupils struggle to form or join letters correctly. Leaders have not established a clear and consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting skills across the school. In some classes, teachers do not provide pupils with high enough expectations of how they present their work. When this is the case, pupils' work is untidy.
- In 2015, standards in the Year 1 national phonics check were low. Standards have increased markedly over the last two years. In 2017, Year 1 pupils' attainment in phonics was above the national average. Therefore, my second line of enquiry explored the reasons for the school's success in this area.
- Since the previous inspection, you have ensured that pupils benefit from daily phonics teaching that is well matched to their abilities. This includes those children in the Reception classes, where well-targeted teaching supports children to use their phonics knowledge when they are writing. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception year has increased. In 2017, it was in line with national figures.
- Alongside this, you have ensured that younger pupils have positive attitudes to reading and have frequent opportunities to practise their phonics skills, both at home and in school. Year 2 pupils told me that they read regularly. The most able pupils spoke enthusiastically about the different books and authors they like to read. However, occasionally, teachers do not check that pupils are reading books that are well matched to their existing phonics knowledge. This prevents pupils from reading as accurately and fluently as they could. Nevertheless, effective teaching means that younger pupils receive a secure foundation in their early reading and phonics skills.
- For my final line of enquiry, we agreed to consider the quality of the provision for key stage 2 pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This was because, for the last two years, the progress of middle-attaining Year 6 pupils in receipt of SEN support was significantly below the national average in

the key stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics assessments.

- Leaders with responsibility for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are passionate about ensuring that pupils' needs are fully understood and met. They have a thorough understanding of pupils' barriers to learning. Drawing effectively on support from external agencies, leaders ensure that pupils' needs are assessed promptly and that effective extra help is put in place at the earliest possible stage. This is particularly the case for pupils' social and emotional needs.
- Leaders involve parents and teachers closely in checking that the provision makes a positive difference to these pupils' outcomes. Pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life. In classrooms, adults typically make sure that pupils receive the support they need to access the learning alongside their peers. Nevertheless, weaknesses in the teaching of writing mean that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make as much progress as they could.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they acquire an accurate and realistic view of the school's effectiveness
- they challenge each other sharply on the impact of their work as opposed to the actions they take, including whether the pupil premium funding is spent well
- the teaching of writing give due weight to the development of pupils' punctuation, spelling, grammar and handwriting skills
- teachers routinely expect pupils to use their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling skills to support them to write at the standard expected for their age
- pupils take pride in how they present their writing, and expectations are consistently high across all year groups and classes in key stage 2.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah Murphy-Dutton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Inspectors met with you and your leadership team to evaluate the impact of your work to improve the quality of education. This included a discussion on your self-evaluation and priorities for improvement. Inspectors visited classrooms together with senior leaders and spoke to pupils about their learning and behaviour. Work in pupils' books was reviewed during visits to classrooms and in a meeting with

leaders. An inspector also listened to a group of Year 2 pupils read. A range of documentation related to safeguarding was considered, including child protection records and the single central record of pre-employment checks on staff. A meeting was also held with the designated leader for safeguarding. Inspectors took into account the views of parents through the 61 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 35 written comments and one letter from a parent. The views of staff were considered through a meeting with a group of teachers and the 29 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. No responses were received to Ofsted's pupil survey.