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Dr Susan Tranter  
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Dear Dr Tranter

### **Short inspection of Edmonton County School**

Following my visit to the school on 1 November 2018 with Carolyn Dickinson, HMI, and Charlotte Robinson, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in December 2014.

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

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

You and your leadership team have managed the continued growth of the school successfully. You manage the challenges faced by the school well, for example the high mobility and well-below-average starting points of pupils in the primary phase. Overall, pupils make good progress. It is particularly strong in English, modern foreign languages and science by the end of key stage 4. The school is split across two campuses and you have established clear systems that are understood by all pupils and staff. The same high standards are promoted and expected across the whole school community.

You and your team are ambitious for pupils and are determined that every pupil should be successful. You want them to gain a deep knowledge and understanding of a broad range of subjects. You are quick to check how well pupils are doing and take prompt action when you notice that progress is too slow.

Working with school leaders, you have successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement from the last inspection. You have ensured that staff understand and implement school policies consistently across both campuses. Pupils are very positive about the school. They describe behaviour as good and say that it is getting even better. Pupils' behaviour in key stage 2 is particularly strong. Pupils across the school enjoy the wide variety of activities offered to them. They told inspectors that

they particularly like the amount of physical education (PE) they receive as well as the variety of art and technology clubs that they can attend.

Staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported by leaders. Those who spoke to inspectors and completed the Ofsted questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school.

In 2017 and 2018, pupils' progress in key stage 4 was very good in a range of subjects, including English, modern foreign languages and science. You are aware of the school's many strengths and celebrate them with the school community. However, you are fully committed to making the school even better. You have identified areas that are less strong, such as literacy and numeracy in Year 1, and humanities. You have responded quickly and positively. The addition of new leaders in the primary phase and in humanities is having a positive impact. Pupils enjoy their learning and are now making faster progress. Leaders have undertaken a thorough curriculum review to ensure that all pupils receive the support and challenge they need.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Together with other leaders, you have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. When appointing new staff, you and other leaders check thoroughly that staff are suitable to work with children. The arrangements for keeping pupils safe across the two campuses are robust. All staff are given extensive safeguarding training. You have ensured that staff understand and implement school policies, which are regularly updated, consistently across both campuses.

Staff are vigilant. They know the warning signs that show a pupil may be at risk of harm and know what to do if they have a concern. Staff know who they should talk to and they act promptly when concerns arise. Staff are swift to refer matters on to external agencies where required and are tenacious when following them up. Staff have a secure understanding of the potential risks that pupils might encounter from outside school, for example knife crime. They use a range of effective strategies to ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe in school. They receive regular advice about how to stay safe online. Most of the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that pupils are safe in school. This view is echoed by staff.

### **Inspection findings**

- For the first key line of enquiry we agreed to look at how effectively leaders are improving pupils' attendance and managing the use of fixed-term exclusion. This is because the number of pupils persistently absent from school is higher than average. Moreover, the use of fixed-term exclusion has also been above the national average.
- Senior leaders have established a clear and effective role for middle leaders in monitoring and dealing with day-to-day attendance. Middle leaders know pupils well and are quick to respond to any individual pupil's absence quickly. However,

senior leaders do not give enough focus to analysing the attendance of different groups of pupils. This means their ability to identify trends and to respond accordingly are being held back. As a result, the level of persistent absence is too high for groups of pupils, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- The refined behaviour policy and greater consistency across the teaching staff has resulted in pupils' good behaviour. Consequently, the use of fixed-term exclusion is decreasing. Pupils who need support in managing their behaviour told inspectors that staff help them by encouraging them to reflect on their actions.
- We then looked at the effectiveness of leaders' work to strengthen outcomes in geography and history. This is because in 2017 and 2018 pupils' progress in geography and history was typically slower than the progress pupils made in other subjects.
- Leaders have clearly identified this as a priority and have not shied away from taking tough staffing decisions. You have appointed new middle leaders for humanities. The new leaders were quick to review and change the curriculum and how the subjects are being taught. Regular monitoring is now taking place to ensure that all staff are fully following the school's procedures. This supports pupils learning.
- The school's own assessment information shows that pupils are now making faster progress in humanities. However, observations of learning and reviews of pupils' work indicate a mixed picture. One reason for this is a lack of challenge for most-able pupils. Where learning activities do not routinely encourage deep thinking, some pupils lose interest and become disengaged.
- For the third key line of enquiry we looked at what leaders are doing to ensure that pupils gain good literacy and numeracy skills before the end of key stage 1.
- Pupils start at the school in the early years and key stage 1 with well-below-average starting points. Staff check on what pupils know and can do when pupils join the school.
- You have appointed two new leaders in the primary phase. They are taking effective action to raise standards, for example in the proportion of children reaching the expected standard in phonics.
- New initiatives to improve pupils' reading skills are beginning to have an impact. There is still more to do, particularly in ensuring that teaching in Reception has a greater sense of urgency in developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Leaders are now focusing on reading more closely. A whole-school reading scheme has recently been introduced, which you are confident will have a positive impact. You recognise that it will take time before the full impact of the strategy is realised.
- For the fourth key line of enquiry we looked at the progress pupils are making across key stage 2. This is because pupils move into key stage 2 with below average attainment, and at the last inspection there were no pupils in upper key stage 2.
- Observations of teaching and reviewing pupils' work support the school's

assessment information. Progress in writing and mathematics across key stage 2 is now strong.

- Teaching of writing is particularly effective. One reason for this is that teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to write extensively. Moreover, they challenge misconceptions quickly. Pupils enjoy their learning, and this is displayed by their good behaviour.
- Leaders have identified that the main priority in the primary phase is to improve reading. You have overhauled the approach to reading, including implementing a new reading scheme. There are clear signs that the initiatives are beginning to have an impact. Pupils are increasingly likely to choose a book to read that challenges them. However, leaders recognise that there is more to do to ensure pupils' attainment rises still further.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching in Reception is more sharply focused on helping pupils' literacy and numeracy development so that a greater proportion of pupils are ready for Year 1
- teaching of reading in key stages 1 and 2, and humanities, is more challenging so that all pupils can access more demanding work
- leaders sharpen their analysis of attendance so that they can respond quickly to emerging patterns and trends.

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

Yours sincerely

Niall Gallagher  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors met with you, senior and middle leaders and the chair of the governing body. We reviewed staff and parent questionnaires. We made visits to classrooms, jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at a range of pupils' work in their books and folders. We met with a group of pupils from key stages 3 and 4 to talk about their views of the school. Inspectors listened to pupils from key stages 1 and 2 reading. We evaluated a range of school documentation, including attendance records, staff training and safeguarding information.

