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17 May 2019

Miss Leona Casey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Miss Casey

### **Short inspection of Danson Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 2019 with Lando Du Plooy, 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 April 2015.

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

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

The school is well led. It is a stimulating place in which to work and learn. As the newly appointed headteacher, you have established your own senior and middle leadership teams with the aim of increasing leadership capacity. You have instilled a strong team ethic across the school, as shown by the year group and curriculum teams. These new structures have contributed strongly to the recent successful expansion of the school from two-form to three-form entry.

You have given priority to ensuring that the environment and management systems underpin the effective running of the school. This is reflected, for instance, in the efficient organisation of playtimes and lunchtimes. You have also made sure that new pupils, parents and carers quickly understand the routines and expectations of the school. One new parent expressed the views of others when she said, 'Although we are new to the school, it has been very supportive and inclusive.'

The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who spoke to inspectors during the inspection expressed positive views about the school. They said that children are safe, happy and well looked after. They also said that you and your staff are visible, approachable and available to sort out any issues they may have. Parents are positive about recent changes to the curriculum. For example, one parent said, 'The school communicates well with us, sets age-appropriate homework and there are a number of engaging curriculum

weeks. Danson always looks for the best in our children.'

Pupils enjoy school. Inspectors spoke with many pupils during the inspection and all confirmed this fact. Pupils value their teachers and others who support their learning. They mostly take pride in their work and are enthusiastic learners. They are well motivated and keen to do well. Pupils understand and can talk about the school's mission statement to ensure that they are 'nurtured, believed in, inspired and achieve'.

School leaders have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. For example, leaders have improved the learning challenge for all pupils, especially in reading and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of both the quantity and quality of pupils' work are high. Teachers provide pupils with helpful ways to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Training has taken place to support staff in their use of questioning and this was seen as being of high quality and effective during the inspection. In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics combined was significantly above the national average at 83%.

You, the staff and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This analysis is reflected in the school development plan. You have worked successfully to improve pupils' progress in mathematics. You have also improved reading in the early years through raising the quality of teaching of phonics. Your efforts to improve assessment practice are helping teachers and pupils to be clear about how their learning is progressing and where more help might be needed. Recent work to improve the curriculum is also beginning to have an impact.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The culture of safeguarding in the school is strong. Link governors work with the designated leaders for safeguarding and fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

Governors make sure that they keep up to date by attending regular training courses. All members of the senior leadership team have been trained in the role of designated lead.

Concerns about pupils' welfare are carefully logged and appropriately detailed. Safeguarding leaders follow up concerns in a timely manner and escalate them where necessary through effective links with external agencies.

Pupils said they feel safe in school and that if they have a concern there is always an adult to help. They said that there is a 'worry box' for pupils to use in each class and these are acted upon by class teachers on a regular basis. Pupils confidently speak about how they keep themselves safe online. They are also clear about what to do if they experience bullying; they said this is rare and is always dealt with effectively by an adult.

## Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed the key lines of enquiry. The first of these was the progress of the most able pupils in writing. This is because, for the past three years, those pupils who had achieved greater depth at the end of key stage 1 did not make the expected progress by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders have helped staff to understand the progression in writing to greater depth by ensuring that assessment is now more accurate, using rigorous internal and external moderation processes. There has been a strong focus on pupils' understanding and application of grammar across the curriculum. Additionally, teachers are using more challenging English texts across key stage 2 as a stimulus for writing.
- Inspection evidence shows an improvement in the most able pupils' writing this year. For example, Year 6 pupils' writing about 'Macbeth' was of a high standard and reflected significant progress over the year. However, there is still work needed to ensure that there is consistent challenge for most-able writers across the school.
- The second line of enquiry focused on how well the school ensures that disadvantaged pupils at the end key stage 1 make the same progress as pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because some pupils fell behind last year.
- We analysed carefully the reasons for this fall in performance. I noted that a number of pupils had very special circumstances, to which the school responded by doing all it could to provide the appropriate support. Even so, the school commissioned an external review of pupil premium spending and is acting on its recommendations. Work has been undertaken to build on improved teaching of phonics in Reception and there has been successful support for disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 (and in Year 6) in reading and mathematics. There was evidence in the books of disadvantaged pupils that teachers are alert to any misconceptions. However, they do not always check that learning is reinforced so that misconceptions are not repeated. This is an area for further improvement.
- Thirdly, I looked at the breadth and quality of subject teaching across the curriculum. The school's curriculum is planned to provide pupils with an interesting range of experiences and opportunities; it also builds in effective literacy links to extend pupils' skills in reading and writing. The school is now developing ways to ensure that the curriculum builds sequentially, with pupils remembering key knowledge at each stage of learning.
- Middle leaders are effective in their work to improve teaching and learning in their subject areas and phases. Science is a particular strength and pupils talked enthusiastically about the practical investigations they plan and carry out. In Year 6, pupils were well motivated to learn about the circulatory system, for example. History and geography are taught as part of the 'creative curriculum'. In Year 5, for example, pupils had studied the Egyptians and specifically learned how the pyramids were made. Such experiences contribute to an enjoyable curriculum that supports pupils' progress across a wide range of subjects.

- Finally, I looked at pupils' attendance, which was average overall in the previous school year. Attendance rates have improved this year and are currently above the national average. Leaders and staff work relentlessly to improve levels of attendance. Leaders have established effective systems to follow up any cases of poor attendance. This approach has reduced the rates of absence of pupils whose attendance was a concern.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers across key stage 2 plan writing lessons which provide greater challenge for most-able pupils
- teachers take rigorous and persistent action to identify and address pupils' misconceptions, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors. During this inspection, we met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements since the last inspection. We conducted several 'learning walks' through the early years and key stages 1 and 2. We observed teaching and learning in the early years and key stages 1 and 2 classrooms and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. We scrutinised a number of science and topic books. We observed behaviour during lessons and at lunchtime. We met with pupils to listen to their experience of school life and how safe they feel. We held meetings with the senior and middle leadership teams and governors. We looked at a range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and the school curriculum. We took account of the views of 107 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, their written comments, and the views of parents who spoke to us before the start of the school day. We also took account of the views of 39 members of staff and 20 pupils, as well as the views of pupils we met during the day.