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Robyn Bruce  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Bruce

### **Short inspection of Cubitt Town Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2019, 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 second short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in June 2012.

#### **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 developed a determined and strong leadership team that works closely together. Leaders, staff and governors are committed to providing the best education for all pupils. Leaders at all levels share your high expectations and the school's ethos of, 'only the best is good enough'. Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious and have high aspirations for themselves.

You and your staff model the behaviour you expect of pupils. As a result, pupils conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner in lessons and around the school. Almost all parents agree that the school ensures that pupils behave well.

Pupils are articulate, polite and positive in their attitudes to learning. They are interested and excited about their work. Throughout the school, pupils focus intently on their learning activities. They demonstrate a willingness to contribute to class discussions, and reflect thoughtfully on the views of others. As some pupils told the inspector, 'lessons are enjoyable, we share our opinions and get to work together'. The environment and classroom displays are vibrant and relevant. They demonstrate high expectations and the broad and balanced curriculum on offer.

Pupils told me how much they appreciate the help and support they are given, particularly from learning mentors and the school counsellor. Parents agreed that pupils are well looked after and happy at school. Comments from Parent View,

Ofsted's online questionnaire, were very positive and typically stated pupils' enthusiasm for learning and how they 'love being at school'.

Following the school's previous inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that a greater proportion of pupils make progress from their starting points. This was to enable them to exceed the expected standard in writing, and to improve presentation. Pupils make good progress from their high starting points at the end of key stage 1. This is a result of strong teaching and leaders' focus on improving standards in writing. In 2018, a higher proportion of pupils achieved the greater depth standard in writing. Consequently, standards at greater depth were in line with the national average for all pupils.

Leaders have raised expectations of pupils' presentation and handwriting. Pupils value learning and are keen to improve. Consequently, pupils now join their handwriting fluently, and the presentation of their work is of a higher quality. You and your leadership team have ensured that these next steps have been tackled robustly.

Governors have a range of expertise and skills that they use to support and challenge school leaders. They understand the community well, and are committed to the success of the school. Governors check that the information they receive from leaders is accurate through their regular visits to the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors understand the risks faced by pupils within the community, and know their statutory responsibilities to keep children safe. They see this as a high priority, and are vigilant. All staff employment checks are complete, and referrals to external agencies are appropriate and timely. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They understand the signs to look out for, and the procedures to follow, if they have a concern about a child.

You and leaders ensure that well-established early help procedures provide support to vulnerable pupils and their families. Parent workshops organised through Community House are used effectively to enable them to support their child's learning and further develop their own skills.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a thorough understanding of how to stay safe online. All pupils spoken to during the inspection said they feel safe at school. Parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are safe and happy at school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Firstly, we considered how effectively teaching has improved pupils' writing, and, particularly, the proportion of pupils attaining greater depth. This was because it was an improvement point for the school following the last inspection.

- Teachers plan a sequence of lessons using high-quality texts, such as 'Macbeth' and 'The Ice Bear'. This ensures that pupils have access to an extensive range of technical and complex punctuation and vocabulary. They learn to use this effectively in their writing to engage the reader.
- Teachers produce good-quality writing models to set high expectations for pupils. Skilful use of assessment enables teachers to challenge and extend pupils' writing skills. They are provided with opportunities to self-edit and improve their writing structure and word choice.
- As a consequence of a well-designed English curriculum and good teaching, more pupils write at the greater depth standard. However, the accuracy of pupils' grammar and spelling is not always fully addressed. As a result, some pupils continue to make the same errors in their writing.
- The second key line of enquiry was to explore how effectively leaders ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. You told me that the curriculum is a strength of the school.
- Leaders have implemented a curriculum with a focus on developing pupils' enquiry and oral skills. Subject leaders are knowledgeable, and understand how to make links between subjects to enhance pupils' learning experiences. The curriculum provides a range of subjects, and pupils have opportunities to build on their prior knowledge. They are able to apply this knowledge in some subjects. For example, as part of their work about the Second World War, pupils wrote a letter from the perspective of an evacuee. This enabled them to use knowledge they had learned in history.
- Through well-planned visits to museums, places of worship and local landmarks, pupils are provided with opportunities to deepen their understanding. Workshops and visitors further enhance their learning experiences. The extended after-school curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to be involved in physical activities. Pupils develop skills and have access to experiences not readily accessible to them outside of the school.
- Pupils' work demonstrates that they have opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of a range of subject-specific knowledge, over time. However, this varies across subjects, and writing across the wider curriculum is not the same quality as in English.
- Our final line of enquiry was to explore how effectively reading is taught across the school, particularly for the disadvantaged and most able pupils. This was identified because progress for pupils at the end of key stage 2, for reading, was average in 2018. It was below the national average in 2017.
- Leaders have developed a reading culture. A well-planned English curriculum, well-resourced reading areas and a library ensure that pupils have access to a range of high-quality reading materials. Pupils said that reading is important to them. They said that teachers read to them, and they are expected to read daily at home.
- Teachers provide pupils with books that are appropriate for their level of understanding. Pupils read fluently and are able to decode unfamiliar words. They are supported and challenged in their reading to develop their

comprehension skills. Pupils apply the skills that they have been taught in reading lessons to enhance their understanding of complex texts.

- As a result of good teaching and well-established approaches to reading, all pupils, including disadvantaged and most-able pupils, read well.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the wider curriculum is further developed to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding are deepened
- pupils' writing across the curriculum is the same high quality as in English
- a consistent approach to addressing pupils' spelling and grammar errors is implemented effectively.

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

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hook  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders. I met with the business manager to look at the single central record. I met with a group of governors. I also met with a representative from the local authority. I observed pupils jointly with senior leaders around school and in lessons. I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' books and spoke to them about their learning. I also met with six members of the school council to seek their views of the school. I took account of the 21 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, including free-text comments. I examined the 59 responses to the pupils' survey, and 23 responses to the staff survey. I scrutinised a range of pupils' books, including English, writing assessment, topic and science books, from all year groups.