

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



8 July 2019

Mrs Samantha Sillito
Headteacher
Queensgate Foundation Primary School
Beatrice Avenue
East Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO32 6PA

Dear Mrs Sillito

Short inspection of Queensgate Foundation Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 June 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 first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Ably supported by your senior leaders and governors, you lead a talented school team that shares your ambition for all pupils to achieve success. You have a detailed understanding of your school, and you reflect carefully on pupils' learning and personal development in order to select actions that will further improve your provision.

Since the school was last inspected, there was a short period when the school's improvement stalled. In the past 18 months, you and your leaders have wasted no time before you increased the pace of school development. You have used the local authority's support and challenge effectively to build staff expertise to address areas of the provision that did not meet your expectations.

Pupils enjoy being at the school and attendance is in line with other primary schools nationally. Caring relationships with the adults in the school support pupils throughout the day. Pupils told me that their teachers expect them to work hard, and I confirmed this to be true when we visited lessons. Their workbooks show that they are currently striving to achieve high standards.

At the previous inspection, inspectors asked you to provide more challenge for the most able pupils. You have deepened your focus on this group, through your termly meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' progress. Staff are concentrating on refining the use of assessment so that teaching consistently meets all pupils' needs.

Inspectors previously asked you to make improvements to some aspects of teaching and learning in the early years. Teachers now give children many opportunities to deepen their learning through their child-initiated activities. We observed some exciting learning taking place in the Reception classes. Children talked animatedly to each other while engaging in their outdoor learning activities. The adults questioned children carefully, encouraging them to express their thinking clearly.

Finally, inspectors recommended that pupils should know more about how to improve their work. You have made effective changes in the school's provision for writing, by ensuring that pupils learn to edit their work by correcting grammar and spelling, vocabulary and content. This approach has made a significant difference to raising the standard of pupils' writing. There are promising signs that, this year, more Year 6 pupils will reach the expected and higher standards than in previous years.

Your governors work hard to ensure that they know the school well, and they bring useful expertise from their work in the wider community. Governors carry out their roles diligently and they ask questions that challenge leaders. They do not always follow these through sharply enough, however, to check that there is sufficient impact from improvement actions on different pupil groups. The governing body does not have enough input into school development planning to help leaders drive the school's continuous development.

Safeguarding is effective.

Designated leaders ensure that the school has strong safeguarding arrangements and that all adults understand how to use the safeguarding systems. All staff are comprehensively trained, and leaders provide regular updates. Even minor changes in pupils' behaviour are noticed and carefully monitored, in case they indicate a deeper concern. Where families need help from agencies beyond the school, leaders make timely referrals.

Adults who are new to the school, including students and volunteers, are trained on their arrival so that they understand school procedures. The school carries out diligent recruitment checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. A link governor maintains an effective overview of the school's systems and procedures for safeguarding. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are confident that their children are safe. They say that it is easy to talk to staff about any concerns. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They know what bullying is, including cyber-bullying, and what to do should it happen.

Inspection findings

- In recent years, a high proportion of pupils have attained good outcomes in mathematics at the end of Year 6. By contrast, pupils' attainment in writing has been below that of reading and mathematics. In 2018, pupils' progress in writing declined to be well below the national average. Similarly, in key stage 1, pupils' writing attainment has been consistently below their attainment in reading and

mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils have attained less favourably in writing than other pupils nationally and none have achieved the higher standard.

- You acknowledge that the school did not respond quickly enough to recent changes in the end-of-key-stage assessments of English. You have now taken effective steps to improve the school's provision. Subject leaders have benefited from local authority support and training. They are having an impact in improving teaching and learning across the school. There is evidence in pupils' workbooks of increasing rates of progress, although leaders' work needs more time to be fully effective.
- Teachers have implemented new strategies for teaching reading and writing with skill and enthusiasm. This has resulted in remarkable improvements to current pupils' achievement. Teachers show pupils how to write, starting with planning and moving through the developmental stages to the final editing process. Pupils' workbooks show that they are writing with increasing fluency and at greater length. They think about how to interest their reader by making intelligent choices about grammar and vocabulary. Classroom visits showed that pupils enjoy and are challenged by their class reading books. The learning activities that pupils undertake to understand their reading help them to be more effective as writers.
- Class teachers have become increasingly alert to the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils. A high proportion of disadvantaged pupils are lower-attaining pupils. They are helpfully supported in class, by additional teaching, practical apparatus, or a prompt to know what their work should look like. However, teachers do not ensure consistently that learning activities are adapted during the lesson to meet all pupils' needs.
- Termly assessments help teachers to identify extra support for pupils who need to catch up, including the most able pupils. Many of the pupils who had fallen behind your expectations, including disadvantaged pupils, are currently making strong progress. Your deputy headteacher takes a particular interest to ensure that children who are looked after are successful in their learning. Foster carers appreciate your school's commitment and understanding.
- Many curriculum subjects are supporting pupils' writing development. There are effective links with English across a broad range of curricular areas. Pupils learn through topics that develop their interests and give them opportunities to answer subject-specific questions and write at length. When pupils write in their English books, their work is generally of a good quality. Subject leaders readily acknowledged that pupils' basic writing skills are not typically transferred to other subjects. Pupils write freely but they do not routinely apply basic grammar rules.
- Children typically start school with lower skills in communication, language and literacy than in other areas. Right from the early years, teachers ensure that language and literacy are at the core of the school's provision. Pupils are successful in the Year 1 phonics check as a result of good teaching and high expectations. During our learning walk, we observed Year 1 undertake some lively drama to enact the story of Grace Darling. Pupils' immersion in the story enriched their vocabulary to help them recount the event. In Year 2, a lesson linking science and art prompted a group of pupils to apply their phonics

knowledge to memorise vocabulary and spelling.

- In all of the lessons that we visited, pupils' understanding of language was a strong feature. They were interested in the subject content, listened carefully to the teaching input and concentrated on their learning activities. For example, we observed Year 6 pupils carrying out some impressive multi-step problem-solving in mathematics, linking it to a real-life situation.
- You have extended the curriculum purposefully by introducing frequent 'Out and About' activities to give pupils regular opportunities for exploring places of interest on the island. The visits provide pupils with the inspiration to communicate their learning. The aim is to support pupils with a rich bank of experiences that deepen their language comprehension. During the inspection, parents commented favourably on this initiative and the introduction of forest-school sessions on 'The Patch' for children in Reception. Through their experiences of nature, children develop and learn to use language expressively.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers refine still further their use of assessment to adapt learning so that it precisely meets individual needs and abilities
- subject leaders continue to develop in their roles, so that they have an impact on pupils' improving rates of progress across the school
- governors make effective use of the information that they have about the school in order to make a full contribution to planning and reviewing the school's improvement priorities.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda Jacobs
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held several meetings with you, your deputy headteacher and some of your other leaders. I met with two members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and I spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority. I observed the quality of learning with you in all year groups, visiting half of the classes and 'The Den'. I noted pupils' behaviour in classrooms, on entry to the school and at playtime. As well as talking to pupils in lessons, I spoke informally to about 16 key stage 2 pupils on the playground to listen to their experiences of the school. Working with senior leaders and English

subject leaders, we reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks.

I considered a range of evidence, including: the school's performance information; leaders' review of progress on the school's improvement plan; information on the school's website; the schools' central record of recruitment checks; and safeguarding policies and procedures. I spoke to parents at the beginning of the day, reviewed 67 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View and took into account 49 accompanying free-text responses. I considered 56 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and 275 pupils' questionnaires.