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Dear Mrs Peet

Short inspection of Queen Emma Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 29 June 2017, 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 May 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained a good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Queen Emma Primary has maintained the positive vision and ethos identified at the previous inspection, through which pupils develop strong academic and social skills. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's support for their children and state that they are well informed about their progress. This is evident in the many positive statements made in Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Parents wrote about the 'extremely dedicated' staff and the 'fantastic management team'.

Highly committed leadership, including that of governors, has ensured that the school's focus on improvement does not waver. You are providing clear vision and, in collaboration with your leadership team, you have worked swiftly to address the areas for improvement defined in the school's improvement plan. Your focus on improving the emotional and social well-being of all pupils is recognised as a strength of the school by many parents.

Governance at Queen Emma Primary is strong. The governing body is effectively led and provides challenge and support in equal measure. Governors share your vision and aspirations for each pupil to achieve well throughout the curriculum. Governors visit the school regularly. They use information gathered on visits and at meetings to inform their questioning of leaders on the quality of teaching and learning at the school.

Pupils' conduct around the school and in classrooms is very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about the topics they study and support each other in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, enabling many to achieve well throughout the curriculum. You and your leadership team have developed a broad and rich curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures through topic-based work such as 'The Islamic Golden Age' and life in Sierra Leone. As a result, many pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and empathise with the experiences of others. Pupils are kind, welcoming and respectful of their peers and adults. They play well together at break and lunchtime.

You are accurate in your judgement that early years is a strength of the school. Leadership of early years is particularly strong, ensuring that the transition between Nursery and Reception is well structured. As a consequence, children enjoy learning and make good progress in a range of skills. The learning environment is well organised, bright and stimulating. The proportion of children making a good level of development is above the national standard. Staff organise activities that are well suited to the needs of children. Leaders and staff maintain high expectations of children and, as a result, the proportion of children exceeding national expectations is also increasing.

Reading is also a particular strength of the school. Pupils that I spoke to were unanimous in their love of reading. High-quality, engaging texts underpin learning throughout the curriculum. Pupils achieve well in reading at the end of key stage 1 and the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening test is above the national average. Pupils are able to talk and write well about characters and themes in books such as 'Traction Man' in Year 1 and 'James and the Giant Peach' in Year 2.

You and your leaders take decisive action where you consider improvements are needed. For example, as a result of your developments in the teaching of writing, outcomes at key stage 1 have remained consistently in line with national averages. Disadvantaged pupils of middle ability achieved significantly above national averages in 2016. You recognise, however that there are still areas for the school to improve. For example, you have clear plans to improve achievements for disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum. You recognise that you need to identify more clearly the different starting points of disadvantaged pupils and accelerate their progress in mathematics and writing. You acknowledge that you need to continue to improve the additional support provided to disadvantaged pupils and help some to attend more often.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils spoke to me with confidence and maturity about the ways in which leaders endeavour to keep them safe. Queen Emma Primary is a very safe and happy place for pupils to learn and thrive. Pupils understand clearly how to keep themselves safe online. All parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children were safe at the school.

Pupils understand the definition of bullying and explained that it was dealt with swiftly by staff when it occurred. School records confirm that incidents of bullying are uncommon. You and your staff frequently question pupils on their feelings about school, which you use to review and adapt the ways in which you care for pupils.

Leaders, including governors, regularly check the school's safeguarding systems to ensure that they remain strong. All records, including checks on adults who work at the school, are securely maintained and reviewed regularly. Safeguarding leads are tenacious in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are provided with necessary and timely support. Adults are alert to changes in pupils' behaviour and know the school's processes for referral well.

Inspection findings

- To ascertain that the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was about the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum. Test results in 2016 suggested that disadvantaged pupils did not achieve in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing, science and mathematics. Although the difference was not significant, you had already recognised this area as a key priority.
- On visiting classrooms, looking at books and talking to staff and your leadership team, it became clear that improving disadvantaged pupils' achievements was central to your school improvement focus. You have a precise understanding of the barriers to learning that these pupils face. Using this information, you have embedded a range of social and emotional strategies, such as a school-based clinician and play therapist. You and your leadership team are very reflective and adaptive to the complex needs that some of your disadvantaged pupils encounter. As a result, pupils told me that they feel more confident after receiving one-to-one additional support in English and mathematics.
- You recognise that disadvantaged pupils require enhanced specialist support in English and mathematics to accelerate their progress. As a result of your forward-thinking leadership, you and your team have recently adjusted the one-to-one and small group support for disadvantaged pupils to ensure that it is led by a qualified teacher. Results have begun to improve, but it is too early to measure the full impact.
- Your careful tracking of disadvantaged pupils demonstrates that they are making improved progress in some areas of the curriculum at both key stage 1 and key stage 2. Evidence from pupils' books also shows that they are making progress from low starting points. However, more needs to be done to ensure that these pupils, in particular those of lower ability, make accelerated progress.
- As my second line of enquiry, I considered how well the curriculum enabled pupils to keep themselves safe. Pupils I spoke to have a very informed understanding of how to keep safe online and the reasons for doing so. Pupils know where to go if they have a problem and are confident that staff keep them

safe. Through the curriculum, pupils develop strategies to cope with the world around them. For example, pupils study the concept of forgiveness in religious studies.

- I looked particularly at the attendance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, as this was lower than that of pupils nationally in 2016. Persistent absence for this group was also high. Your careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' attendance, alongside work with the family worker and other agencies, has had an impact and the number of absences has declined. Throughout the curriculum, you ensure that pupils are aware of the value of school and the options and possibilities that it can offer. A range of incentives are embedded in the curriculum, such as the class attendance bear. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' attendance has improved, but continues to remain below the national figure.
- I also focused on the improvements that pupils at both key stage one and key stage two were making in writing. After the previous inspection, you and your leadership team made writing a whole school priority. Work in books demonstrates that pupils have a wide range of opportunities to write in many areas of the curriculum, such as science, religious studies, geography and history. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, make swift progress in crafting their writing through careful selection of words and sentences for effect. Pupils from lower starting points also make good progress. Teachers provide effective guidance, both within the classroom and within pupils' books, to promote pupils' progress. Pupils take care with capital letters and punctuation. At both key stages, pupils write at length and edit and review their work. As a result, pupils I spoke to were able to talk clearly about how they improved their writing.
- Another key line of enquiry was to explore the support provided to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as the proportion of pupils eligible for education, health and care plans is higher than the national average. You and your leadership team ensure that the school is fully inclusive. Well-trained teaching assistants and teachers ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to access the same curriculum as other pupils. Staff use a range of strategies tailored to the needs of pupils, such as enlarged models of writing and one-to-one support. Leadership of the provision and support for these pupils is strong. Leaders are acutely aware of the emotional and social issues that may accompany pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They are very sensitive to their needs and undergo regular professional development in the most effective strategies, which they share with staff. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress across the curriculum, in line with other pupils nationally.
- I also considered the effectiveness of early years provision in ensuring that a good proportion of children made a good level of development in 2017. Overall, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in 2015 and 2016 was in line with that found nationally. However, fewer disadvantaged children met the national standard. Leadership of early years is highly effective. The seamless transition from Nursery to Reception means that children's key skills develop well and many currently exceed national expectations in a range of

skills. Staff provide additional support to develop the skills of disadvantaged children, particularly their language skills. This is ensuring that disadvantaged children currently in Reception are making better progress from their starting points than previously. Throughout my observations in Nursery and Reception lessons, children remained focused on well-structured activities. The dinosaur-themed tasks enabled children developing their language and communication skills well. For example, I observed two children sharing ideas about how the toy dinosaurs had hatched from their eggs. As a result of well-planned provision, children develop good social skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers continue to provide high-quality support to disadvantaged pupils, so that they make accelerated progress in all areas of the curriculum
- they continue to improve the attendance 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 Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Susan Aykin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- During the course of this inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior and middle leaders, and a group of five governors. I also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- I spoke with pupils informally in classrooms and when walking around the school site. I also met with a group of 14 pupils.
- During two tours of the school with you, I visited each class and observed pupils at work.
- I undertook a scrutiny of pupils' work in their books and folders.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, along with the school's record of checks carried out on staff working at the school.
- A range of documents were analysed or discussed, including: the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; documents relating to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour; minutes of governor meetings and curriculum plans.

- I considered the views of 123 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views parents expressed via free text.