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19 June 2015

Jill Jones  
Headteacher  
Four Swannes Primary School  
King Edward Road  
Waltham Cross  
EN8 7HH

Dear Mrs Jones

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Four Swannes Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 18 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour and safety of pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

The inspector considered a wide range of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons and throughout the day.
- discussion with pupils.
- documentary evidence, including behaviour logs and attendance records
- discussions with the headteacher, the attendance officer, a representative of the local authority and staff.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection.

## **Context**

Four Swannes Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. Approximately half of the pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, (additional funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) which is well above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are much higher than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, as well as the proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the academic year, is higher than the national rates.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Teachers and other adults in the school have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and they apply the school's behaviour policy well; consequently, behaviour is good. A calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils enter their lessons swiftly, quietly and ready to learn, so that no time is lost. They quickly get on with their work and follow teachers' instructions readily. Lessons run smoothly because low-level disruption is rare. If pupils fail to complete their work in lessons in the time allocated because they have not applied themselves well enough, teachers direct them to finish tasks at playtimes. This is intended to reinforce the school's expectation that all pupils should work hard. However, the school does not track the pupils who stay in at playtimes, to identify patterns such as the same children being sanctioned in this way.

Pupils adhere to the school's dress code and wear their uniform with pride. You and other staff know the pupils as individuals; relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. During the inspection, pupils listened considerately during assembly. They answered questions willingly and took part in prayers and reflection time appropriately. Pupils are confident, friendly and polite.

Pupils' behaviour at lunch and playtimes is also good. The dining room is a pleasant place to eat because the atmosphere is positive. Pupils play together well and they are supervised carefully. The school records the usual minor bumps and grazes that happen but there are very few incidents of pupils hurting each other. Teachers and mid-day supervisors deal with pupils' concerns or disagreements sensitively and thoroughly so that issues are addressed before they become problems.

Pupils say, and records show, that incidents of bullying or racism are very rare. Pupils understand the main forms of bullying and they have confidence that adults will address any concerns. Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet and mobile telephones.

The recent appointment of the attendance officer demonstrates your determination to address low attendance. Attendance is improving but remains below average. The attendance officer checks the attendance of all pupils rigorously. She follows up

pupils' absence with telephone calls and letters to parents and carers. She is relentless in endeavouring to contact parents, including those who are hard to reach. When attendance falls to unacceptably low levels, she invites parents into school to discuss concerns. However, meetings are arranged when attendance declines to below approximately 93% this is too low a threshold and does not help to stem poor attendance early enough. You do not approve holidays in term times and remind parents about the school's expectations for good attendance in your regular newsletters. Pupils receive rewards for good attendance; a weekly attendance cup for the class with the highest attendance is popular with pupils.

The attendance officer also tracks pupils' punctuality and talks to parents at the school entrance to discuss any late arrival. As a result of this work, punctuality is improving.

### **External support**

The local authority provides additional support to improve attendance but over time it has not supported the school's efforts well enough. Visits to the school by the local authority officers are too infrequent and changes in local authority staff have hindered better progress. The school relies on the local authority to progress matters, through their use of formal powers. However, to date no fixed penalties have been issued.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Track the pupils who stay in a playtimes to complete their work, to ensure that procedures are effective in encouraging all pupils to apply themselves consistently well in lessons
- Ensure the school intervenes quickly to address falling attendance before it becomes unacceptably low
- Ensure that the school has the additional support it needs from the local authority to address serious concerns about pupils' attendance.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Hertfordshire, the Secretary of State for Education and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**