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23 March 2016

Rose Ashton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Ms Ashton

### **Short inspection of Chalkhill Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 9 March 2016, 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 July 2011.

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

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

Your determination and commitment to providing the very best for pupils have ensured that the school's provision and pupils' outcomes have improved significantly since the last inspection. You have maintained the momentum of improvement despite the challenges you and your colleagues face. A considerably larger proportion of pupils than seen nationally join or leave the school mid-year. For example, approximately one-sixth of pupils currently in Year 3 joined the school after the Reception Year. Similarly, a significantly higher proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language. You have taken this into account in developing an effective approach to supporting these pupils. By adding the role of phase leader in September 2014, you have increased the capacity of the school's leadership, enabling additional support and challenge for teachers throughout the school.

At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attendance was broadly average. You have established effective procedures to promote pupils' regular attendance. Pupils' attendance is now higher than average. This is a result of a combination of factors: the parent support adviser works closely with parents of pupils whose attendance causes concern; a series of incentives are available to pupils and classes whose attendance warrants reward; you take a robust approach to unauthorised absence, issuing penalty notices in the most serious cases. During the current academic year, there have been no pupils persistently absent.

Pupils arrive at school punctually and look forward to the daily 'wake-up, shake-up' routine in the playground before entering their classes.

You and your colleagues have a good understanding of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and provide effective support for them. Rightly, you have considered the skills pupils will need to contribute effectively to society and those required to secure further education and employment in the future. As a result, pupils' aspirations have been raised and they are better prepared to consider their future prospects.

Governors have a clear understanding of their strategic role. They share your determination that pupils receive the best start possible so that they are well prepared to achieve their long-term goals. Governors are proud that the early years provision has been identified as a centre of excellence by the local authority. They are well informed about the school's context and the challenges it faces. However, neither governors nor leaders allow excuses to be made on the basis of the school's challenging circumstances. Their structured visits to the school provide governors with first-hand experience of how priorities are being addressed. As a result of recent training, governors are knowledgeable about their duties to protect pupils from extremism.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding has a high profile in the school. It has prominence in the school's development planning. Staff are appropriately trained, with the designated safeguarding lead having undertaken the required enhanced training. There is a strong culture of vigilance; staff are acutely aware of the need to keep a watchful eye on pupils and to be sensitive to any changes in their behaviour which may highlight a concern. Staff have a good understanding of issues relating to extremism, female genital mutilation and other significant safeguarding topics, having been well trained. You have made sure that these important topics have been shared with parents through parent forum meetings, newsletters and a series of leaflets available from the school's entrance area. Clear procedures outline how staff record and refer their concerns within school. Where referrals are made to external agencies, clear records are kept of communications and meetings. The safeguarding lead is persistent in her dealings with professionals beyond the school. She is persistent in her approach if they are slow to respond. Parents spoken to did not have any concerns about their children's safety. Pupils explained that they felt safe as a result of the range of measures in place; they know that they are well supervised at breaktimes and that the gate is manned at the beginning and end of the school day. Pupils take reassurance from knowing that staff will provide the right support at times of need.

### **Inspection findings**

- In 2015, higher proportions of pupils than seen nationally made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics between Key Stages 1 and 2. Higher than average proportions also made more than the expected progress. This strong progress is the result of teachers' high expectations of pupils of all abilities. Significantly higher proportions of pupils attained the expected level in mathematics and reading at the end of Year 6, while the proportion achieving the expected level in writing was above average. The proportions of pupils attaining at a level above that expected was broadly average.

- Children start school with skills and abilities well below those typical for their age. Many speak little or no English. They make strong progress, with an average proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. A similar proportion of pupils to that seen nationally reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. A significant number of children who are new to speaking English join the school during Years 1 and 2. This contributes significantly to the proportions of pupils reaching the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1, in reading, writing and mathematics, being lower than average. Significantly fewer pupils reached the higher level in recent years.
- Standards in writing are lower than they are in reading and mathematics. You and your team have been working hard to address this. You have identified some successful strategies which have increased the rate of pupils' progress. You have found that pupils' writing is of higher quality when they have previously had a chance to speak what they intend to write. You also know that pupils' writing benefits from them being introduced to new vocabulary and supported to understand newly learned words. Pupils make good use of the materials available in classrooms to support their writing. For example, they know they should refer to the displays on the walls and to the word lists on their tables. You have identified that having a purpose for their writing helps pupils to improve their writing. For example, Year 6 pupils recently wrote agony aunt style letters on the subject of transition to secondary school, which were subsequently published in the local newspaper.
- Work to address the quality of writing begins in the early years. Staff provide creative opportunities for children to make marks and to begin to write. When the disappearance of a picture in the Reception class was attributed to the imaginary troll, children were challenged to design and label a troll trap, listing the materials that would be needed to construct it. In conjunction with your approach to promote writing in this way, staff provide opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills and exercise the muscles they use to hold their pencil correctly. The proportion of pupils attaining above the expected level in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 has increased steadily over the last three years.
- Your support for pupils who speak English as an additional language ensures that they make progress quickly. You also appreciate the benefits that supporting these pupils' families brings. The family learning sessions you provide enable parents to develop their own language skills as well as learning how to support their children at home. In common with your approach to improving all pupils' writing, you tailor specific support for these pupils, making sure they gain a grasp of the everyday language they need in, and beyond, school. The many visits from, and visitors to, school provide the first-hand experiences these pupils need to help them get to grips with unfamiliar contexts and concepts.
- Parents speak highly about the school's work. You have implemented various strategies to collect parents' views and to ensure that they are informed about their children's progress. End of year reports provide clear information about whether pupils are working at, below or above the level expected. Meetings during the year address issues relating to the curriculum including the expectations of results in national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and of the phonics check in Year 1. 'Stay and play' sessions in the early years allow parents see how their children are taught in school so that they are better able to support them at home.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the effective work being done to improve pupils' writing results in a reduction of the gap between attainment in writing and that in reading and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Brent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Loukes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, senior leaders, middle leaders, a representative of the Brent Schools Partnership and a group of staff comprising teachers and teaching assistants. I also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. We visited a selection of Key Stage 1 and 2 classes together, observing teaching and learning, and reviewing the work in pupils' books. I spoke to a number of parents in the playground at the beginning of the school day and took account of the 97 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I considered the 13 responses to the staff questionnaire. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with others in the playground. I scrutinised a range of documentation including that relating to the school's own evaluation of its performance and to safeguarding.