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Mrs Jacqueline Watson  
Headteacher  
Joydens Wood Junior School  
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Kent  
DA2 7NE

Dear Mrs Watson

### **Short inspection of Joydens Wood Junior School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 March 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 March 2015.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Following your appointment in January 2018, you rightly identified weaknesses in the school's performance, including in safeguarding procedures and in the quality of teaching and learning.

Weaknesses in teaching have hindered the quality of pupils' learning since the previous inspection. Pupils' starting points are typically above the national averages in English and mathematics when they join the school at the start of Year 3. Teaching has not built strongly enough on pupils' starting points for some time. While some groups of pupils achieve well, others, including disadvantaged pupils, do not make sufficiently strong progress. This is especially the case in writing and mathematics, where gaps in knowledge and understanding hinder pupils' learning.

In 2018, outcomes at the end of Year 6 were above the national averages in reading and mathematics and in line with the national average in writing. However, you are right to recognise that this largely positive picture in standards masks variations in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

In the past year, you have worked purposefully and constructively with your staff team. You have accelerated the pace of development in the school and have

introduced a greater sense of urgency about improving the quality of teaching and learning. You have secured substantial developments in the school's work and have begun to address the key issues for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. You have tightened up safeguarding procedures considerably; improved systems for assessing pupils' learning; raised teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement and strengthened communication with parents. You and your team are now rightly focusing on securing further improvements in the quality of teaching.

You have made sure that teachers have the skills needed to assess pupils' learning fully and accurately. As a result, teachers are much clearer about pupils' starting points. They adjust teaching with increasing skill to support pupils' different needs. As a result, teaching now builds pupils' learning much more securely than before. However, while the quality of teaching is better than it was, variations remain and pupils do not learn as well as they should as a result.

The school's friendly, calm and positive atmosphere provides a secure framework for its work. Pupils work hard and behave well in this happy and well-organised school. They enjoy school and feel very safe. Pupils say that they are able to talk freely to their teachers and that any concerns that they may have are sorted out well. Most parents are positive about the school's work. They feel that their children are getting on well, both socially and academically, and appreciate some of the improvements you have introduced since your appointment.

Governors and trustees are supportive of your ambitions for the school and are knowledgeable about some aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding issues. However, they do not have a sufficiently clear view of pupils' outcomes, about the quality of teaching or about priorities for development in the school's work.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have strengthened the school's safeguarding culture considerably since your appointment. You have rectified weaknesses and omissions in safeguarding procedures fully. For example, you have established clear procedures for visitors to the school and have made sure that the school is well-organised, tidy and attractive throughout. As a result, pupils are able to learn and play safely, comfortably and securely. You make sure that safeguarding policies are fit for purpose, understood by all members of staff and followed consistently throughout the school. Staffing and recruitment checks are given an appropriately high priority and completed promptly and fully.

You and your team have established rigorous systems for checking that safeguarding requirements are maintained. You make good use of training to update staff and governors about safeguarding issues so that they are clear about what steps to take if they have any concerns about pupils' welfare. Governors and trustees have a strong understanding of safeguarding procedures and give pupils' safety a high priority. They regularly consider and discuss your safeguarding reports

and maintain careful checks on the school's safety procedures.

## **Inspection findings**

- We focused particularly on the following areas during the inspection: how well teaching builds on pupils' starting points, especially in writing; how effectively leaders use pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils' learning; and how well the school communicates with parents.
- Historical weaknesses in teaching have hindered pupils' progress since the previous inspection. Variations in the quality of teaching mean that some pupils have gaps in their English and mathematical knowledge and understanding which make it difficult for them to achieve well. For example, some pupils are unclear about how to use grammar and punctuation successfully in their written work, while others lack the skills needed to tackle mathematical problems successfully.
- The quality of teaching has improved considerably in the past year, as seen from the school's monitoring information. For example, the mathematics curriculum has been revised so that pupils can develop stronger reasoning and problem-solving skills than previously. In English, many pupils write enthusiastically and proficiently and use dictionaries and other resources increasingly well to support their written work. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching continue to hamper pupils' learning. As a result, some pupils learn less well than others and do not achieve as well as they should.
- In the past, leaders have used the pupil premium appropriately to support disadvantaged pupils' personal, emotional and social needs. However, until recently, leaders paid too little attention to disadvantaged pupils' academic and learning needs. The headteacher and her team are now addressing this issue, with some early signs of success in pupils' progress. However, the impact of improvements in the quality of teaching on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is not yet clear.
- The leadership team has improved the quality of communication with parents substantially since the previous inspection. For example, leaders give parents plenty of notice of key dates; they provide a comprehensive range of information on the school's website, including curriculum information, and they have established a wide range of events for parents to find out more about their children's learning.
- The family liaison officer plays a central role in school life. She establishes strong links with pupils and their families and works closely with agencies to support pupils' personal development and welfare.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements in teaching are fully established so that pupils learn consistently well, especially in writing and mathematics
- disadvantaged pupils make strong progress in line with others nationally with

similar starting points

- governors have a clear and accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school and hold leaders to account rigorously for pupils' outcomes.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

You and I observed learning in 11 lessons during the inspection. I looked at pupils' work during our visits to the classrooms, as well as considering a sample of pupils' work separately with you and your deputy headteacher. I reviewed a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan, the single central register, safeguarding documents and information about pupils' progress.

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and with a representative of the local authority. I also met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a trustee. I spoke with staff, parents and pupils. In addition, I considered 67 views expressed by parents through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 61 free-text comments and 21 responses to the staff survey.