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18 December 2015

Mrs Samantha Sillito
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Sillito

Short inspection of Queensgate Foundation Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 November 2015, 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have accelerated the rate of improvement and ensured that your vision to establish a well-thought-of school at the heart of its community is realised. Since the school opened in 2010, you have united the staff, parents and pupils successfully, engendering values of pride and purpose. Pupils, parents and staff are all proud to be members of the Queensgate Foundation Primary community. Parents hold you in high regard and appreciate your good communication with them; they feel extremely confident that if they have concerns, you will listen and seek to resolve any issues promptly, and to everyone's satisfaction. Your unwavering resolve and high levels of commitment to the pupils of Queensgate Foundation Primary School has ensured that this is a rapidly improving school in a whole host of respects.

You know the school inside out, identifying precisely the key priorities. You are highly skilled at doing the right things at the right time. Leaders' school improvement planning is detailed and thorough, with no stone left unturned. At the last inspection, inspectors identified a need to extend the role of phase and subject leaders. Now, you are ably supported by a highly skilled leadership team. The quality of school improvement planning is a testament to the progress made in this regard. All leaders monitor their subjects regularly, offering shrewd analysis to inform action planning well. Local authority training has contributed well to enhancing all leaders' effectiveness. As a result, you have a cohesive and dedicated team.

Since the previous inspection, pupils' attendance has improved significantly because of your determined efforts to spread the word that regular attendance is important. From low attendance in 2013, attendance is now above average. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They particularly enjoy 'out and about visits' as they gain practical experiences that support their learning. They are resounding in their praise for their teachers, commenting, 'They always help you no matter what.' Pupils radiate increasing levels of ambition, self-assurance and confidence. An engaging curriculum, enhanced by regular visits such as those from Olympians, contributes well to pupils' positive outlooks. They are inspired to achieve well as they go on to the next stages of their education.

You have fully addressed the recommendation to improve the quality of teaching. Staff work hard to achieve your aims and fulfil your ambition for the school's success. They are committed wholeheartedly to improving their skills and expertise in order to provide positive learning experiences for pupils. As a result, standards have risen considerably in the last three years, with all age groups achieving higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite many pupils joining the school with below typical skills and abilities, many pupils make good progress and catch up by the end of Year 6. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2015 were broadly average in reading and mathematics and marginally below average in writing. Standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils have risen considerably, and the gap between these pupils and other pupils nationally is narrowing. You have identified rightly that some pupils make slower progress in writing than in reading and mathematics. Similarly, you have identified that too few of the most-able pupils achieve the higher levels, particularly in Key Stage 1. Staff are working determinedly to speed up pupils' progress in writing and provide work that is more challenging for the most-able pupils. You are keeping a close eye on standards and there is evidence that pupils are now making more rapid progress in developing their writing skills than in the past. For example, more pupils are entering Key Stage 1 with writing skills typical for their age.

Safeguarding is effective.

Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. They appreciate the guidance they receive from all adults. They are confident that problems are resolved quickly. Pupils and parents acknowledge that when disagreements have occurred, staff, including the headteacher, are highly committed to resolving issues and ensuring that incidents do not repeat themselves. The school's record keeping is extremely thorough, exemplifying the high importance leaders attach to ensuring that pupils are happy and safe.

Leaders have recently revised the school's e-safety guidelines and pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe online. The school makes appropriate checks on all adults, including volunteers, to confirm their suitability to work with children. Through much of the work of the nominated safeguarding governor, governors are able to assure themselves that safeguarding requirements are met.

Inspection findings

- Your proficient evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is leading to rapid improvement after a dip in standards in 2014. You keenly set about developing the appropriate plans to tackle areas that need development. Subject leaders and governors all contribute well and there is a shared commitment to developing the school further, by raising aspirations and achieving success. As the school continues on an upward trajectory, school performance targets rightly become more ambitious year on year. Standards are rising quickly and much has been achieved in the past 12 months.
- Disadvantaged pupils are catching up quickly and the attainment gap between these pupils and other pupils nationally is narrowing by the end of Key Stage 2. This is because pupils receive a range of support that is designed well to meet their individual learning needs. For example, more disadvantaged pupils met the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics (letter and the sounds they make) check in 2015 than in previous years. Teaching assistants contribute well, offering helpful support and guidance when working with younger pupils to sound out their letters accurately so they can decipher unknown words.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Your expectations are understood clearly and teachers feel well supported to develop their skills and expertise. Training opportunities, including support from local authority advisors, has contributed well to ensuring consistency and raising standards. Students from Southampton University undertaking school-based placements echo the views of school staff. They feel positive about the help they receive at Queensgate Foundation Primary School in the early stage of their careers.
- More pupils are entering Key Stage 1 with skills and abilities appropriate for their age. Equally, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 are catching up quickly and more pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years. However, leaders acknowledge that pupils' progress in writing is slower than in reading or mathematics. Your mantra to ignite a love of writing in order for pupils to 'see themselves as writers' is appropriate. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs, are writing for more sustained periods and with greater enthusiasm. The introduction of appealing texts in order to inspire learners is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress, with many rapidly acquiring essential, key skills.
- Governors work efficiently and are determined to do their job well in order to provide support and challenge to the headteacher. They meet regularly

with school leaders and keep school performance under close observation. In addition, they have completed an audit of their skills and made good use of local authority training to enhance their expertise. Such activities are contributing effectively to deepening governors' involvement in school improvement. Governors are knowledgeable and committed to providing the best for Queensgate pupils.

- The teacher with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is adept at ensuring that pupils' wide-ranging needs are met well. The school's local offer of services for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is comprehensive and enhanced by the work of other agencies, including local authority central services such as the sensory team. Increasingly, many pupils with specific needs achieve as well as their peers.
- The local authority provide a high level of challenge through the work of the school's learning partner. Regular visits contribute well to supporting the headteacher and keeping teaching and learning under review. Both the school's learning partner and senior leaders find these regular visits helpful in evaluating the school's effectiveness and shaping improvement priorities.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are well mannered, respectful and considerate towards adults and pupils alike. They have a good understanding of different values including tolerance and respect. They appreciate the support of their teachers and feel help is always freely available if they experience difficulties or find some aspect of their learning tricky. Occasionally, they think their tasks could be a little more demanding.
- Physical education is popular with Queensgate pupils, as a rich menu of activity holds great appeal for pupils. Pupils enjoy sporting success such as winning the Cowes cluster handball competition recently. Led ably by the school's sports coordinator, there is a sincere commitment to providing high-quality sporting opportunities.
- Pupils are making more rapid progress than in the past, especially in reading and mathematics. Average-ability pupils and those who have fallen behind are catching up quickly and achieving the standards expected for their age. Higher-ability pupils are not yet making sufficient progress to achieve the higher levels, especially in Key Stage 1. This is because teachers do not set challenging enough tasks regularly and pupils are not stretched to their full capabilities.
- Teachers usually provide helpful feedback to pupils about how to improve their work. However, this is not always the case and pupils sometimes do

not understand what is expected clearly enough, or have sufficient time to address the mistake or misconception identified.

- Since the previous inspection, attendance has risen and it is now above average. Parents and pupils alike appreciate senior leaders' warm welcome into school every morning. All members of the school community are playing their part well in ensuring that regular attendance is the norm.
- Children join the early years with skills below those typical for their age. Many make good progress, especially in the acquisition of speech and language skills. Adults communicate well with children in teacher-led activities, asking relevant questions to determine and support children's understanding. However, adults do not capitalise on opportunities to develop children's learning more rapidly by starting conversations during activities that children have chosen themselves.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- teachers plan challenging activities in order to accelerate the progress of higher-ability pupils so that more achieve the higher levels, particularly at Key Stage 1
- pupils know how to improve their work and further their understanding
- in early years, adults seize on learning opportunities to interact with children in independent, self-chosen learning activities in order to encourage rapid progress.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Farr

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, other senior leaders, pupils and two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. I spoke to a representative of Hampshire local authority by telephone. We visited nine lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of 14 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I observed pupils' behaviour on arrival at school and during the school day. I spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day. I analysed a range of school documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness.