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Mr Peter Lewis  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Lewis

### **Short inspection of Emmanuel Community School**

Following my visit to the school on 4 December 2018, 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 2014.

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

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

The school has grown to full capacity since the last inspection and now has its first Year 6 cohort. You and your team have ensured that the vision for the school has been maintained throughout the expansion. You, your leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and the pupils. You have taken strategic action to ensure that pupils get the best. This can be seen, for example, in how staffing and the curriculum are organised and managed.

In order to continue improving the school, you have an outward-looking, collaborative and reflective approach. You work closely with and learn from strong practice in outstanding schools as part of your development plan. You also have strong links with the local authority that strengthen the school's capacity to provide for and protect all pupils. Working with other schools and learning from the strong practice in these schools is a way of working that has benefited provision at the school. You listen to staff views and have made changes in response that would benefit pupils, for example changes to the organisation of phonics. Staff feel well supported and believe that the school is improving.

You continue to draw on the church as a resource for volunteer helpers and to support pupils' spiritual development. Parents and carers value the strong sense of community that you foster. They appreciate how the school lives up to its Christian ethos through staff who are 'unceasingly caring'. You provide a wide range of extra-

curricular activities to support parents and widen the experience and opportunities that pupils get.

Pupils continue to be taught well, including in the new key stage 2 classes. Teachers' subject knowledge provides effective challenge for pupils from their starting points. Since the last inspection, you have been developing the use of pupil learning targets to help pupils improve. Using examples of practice from other schools, you are continuing to develop these, particularly in key stage 1.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders are vigilant in safeguarding the well-being of all pupils, including the most vulnerable. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are based on current statutory guidance. Procedures for reporting and recording concerns are detailed. Work with the local authority has ensured that timely intervention is made where pupils are at risk and families are appropriately supported. All members of the community, including parent volunteers, are checked and trained to ensure that they are able to support leaders' vision for a safe school. Governors hold the school to account for its safeguarding duty.

Pupils report that they are kept safe by staff who are caring, supportive and give them strategies to use when they have any worries. They know how to keep themselves safe because of guidance given in lessons, assemblies and from visitors to the school. Pupils' needs are well met, as the designated safeguarding lead works thoroughly with external agencies and parents. Parents agree with these views.

### **Inspection findings**

- In English lessons, pupils are taught well how to write. The most able writers demonstrate that they can write for different purposes, and at length. Work in writing books shows that they are developing their own creativity and individual flair for writing. Progress in writing for the most able is evident within their current year group and throughout their school life.
- This was seen in their 'yellow books', which contain examples of pupils' writing from Reception to their current year group. The quality of writing in Year 6 for the most able is strong. Pupils use a wide range of interesting vocabulary accurately and in context. Teachers provide challenging tasks based on texts and experiences that the pupils have enjoyed. As a result, they are able to write independently and make good progress from individual starting points. Some pupils in the younger year groups would benefit from further support for them to achieve their teachers' high expectations. The quality of handwriting and presentation in books is better for the most able pupils and those in key stage 2. This is inconsistent in the younger year groups.
- Phonics teaching is effective in developing current pupils' skills and enabling them to apply these to reading and writing. As a result of changes to groupings and how pupils are taught, pupils now receive more targeted support and are stretched from their current individual level. Leaders made this change following the drop in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1

phonics screening check in 2018. There was also a difference between the achievement of boys and girls, with more girls reaching the standard expected for their age than boys.

- Leaders are ensuring that pupils get a good foundation in phonics by setting targets for pupils to achieve full marks on the test. Assessment information from the school shows that pupils' performance in practice checks is improving, with some improving significantly in a few months. The difference between the achievement of boys and girls in 2018 has not proven to be a trend. Within that cohort was a significant proportion of boys with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who would not have met age expectation. Some pupils have low starting points, for example due to speaking English as an additional language, and are not yet at the standard expected for their age. These pupils' needs are being addressed through good quality of teaching.
- The quality of teaching in non-core subjects in key stage 2 is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and understanding across subjects. Pupils are excited to learn and engage well as individuals and collaboratively. They experience good depth and breadth of knowledge, which will prepare them well for the expectations of secondary school. Pupils use subject-specific vocabulary well and demonstrate confidence when explaining their learning in subjects such as science and geography. Pupils' books and feedback suggest that they spend less time doing non-core subjects. There are also fewer opportunities for them to apply their writing skills beyond English lessons. Leaders are developing systems to monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the curriculum, particularly in key stage 2.
- Attendance is improving and is above the national average. Rates of persistent absence have reduced and are now in line with the national average. This is an ongoing priority for the school. Leaders use a range of strategies, including rewards for pupils, to encourage 100% attendance. Pupils understand the importance of coming to school every day. A school-based community liaison officer works closely with families who need support or challenge to improve their child's attendance. This includes a number of families who have been evicted from their homes or relocated out of the borough. The impact of the experiences of vulnerable families can be seen in the change in attendance patterns for individual pupils. The school also works closely with the local authority in their strategy to reduce the high percentage of families who take holidays during term time.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders systematically evaluate the impact of the curriculum, drawing on the views of stakeholders, to ensure that it is effective
- pupils are given opportunities across the wider curriculum to develop their writing skills further.

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

Yours sincerely

Karla Martin-Theodore  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and the director of education for the trust. I met the chairs of the trust and the governing body and one other governor. I met with the safeguarding lead and the coordinator responsible for key stage 2 and the curriculum. I analysed the 36 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the free-text responses from parents. I also considered the views of 17 members of staff who took part in the Ofsted survey. You and the director of education accompanied me on my short visits to lessons in all year groups. We looked at samples of pupils' books together. I spoke to pupils in lessons about their learning and listened to Year 1 and 2 pupils read during lessons. I also met with the school council.