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Mrs C Lester  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Lester

### **Short inspection of Cheam Fields Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 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 November 2010.

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

Senior leaders have ensured that the good quality of education in the school has been maintained since the last inspection. The strong moral purpose which underpins your work inspires a strong commitment from all parts of the school community. You provide the means for the talents and enthusiasm of your staff to flourish. As a result, they have the skills and the passion to help you improve the school further, and can identify their own part in the school's success. Teachers who are new to the profession or the school are crystal clear about your expectations as soon as they arrive. They also benefit from the high-quality support and training your senior leaders skilfully facilitate. This has enabled you to ensure that the good quality of teaching has been maintained through a recent period of staff change.

While rightly placing a strong emphasis on nurturing talent from within the school, you have made effective decisions about when and how to draw upon the expertise of the wider educational community. This has enabled you to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection effectively. For example, a consultant from another local school is providing intense, effective support to improve the quality of the teaching of mathematics. While this work is not complete, its positive impact on the progress of pupils of all abilities during the current school year is clearly evident, especially in their more recent work.

You have improved the curriculum so that it now enables pupils to develop the skills they need to research and investigate their own ideas. You also make sure pupils benefit from fresh ideas and a perspective on learning which reaches well beyond their immediate community. They now have wider opportunities to learn about issues which concern the whole of humanity, such as deforestation. Senior leaders have managed the process of improving the range of computers and other information technology well. As a result, pupils know how to use these safely and skilfully to support their learning across the whole curriculum.

Senior leaders use regular, systematic checks on pupils' progress to decide how successful their plans for improvement have been. They also use these checks to pick up on any groups of pupils or individuals whose progress appears to be stalling. This ensures that any pupils who need additional support receive it promptly. Your senior leaders have a crucial role in helping leaders who are newer to their roles, or less experienced, to focus the evaluation of their plans for improvement more sharply on the difference they are making to outcomes for pupils.

You have rightly recognised the importance of strengthening links between home and school. Senior leaders make sure parents receive the good news about their children as well as being available when concerns are raised. For example, you notice when the attendance of pupils is exceptional or is improving well and make sure that this is celebrated. However, despite your efforts, some pupils still do not come to school often enough. You recognise that improving overall rates of attendance must remain a focus in your improvement plans.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The checks you make on the suitability of staff are very well organised and documented. The staff responsible for administering these are meticulous perfectionists when it comes to maintaining these records. Governors keep a close eye on the implementation of agreed procedures. The systematic approach to the review of school provision, which is a hallmark of all their work, gives governors a well-informed picture of safeguarding.

Procedures for responding to concerns are well understood and underpinned by suitable, regular staff training. Records and examples of correspondence seen, demonstrate that senior leaders respond thoroughly when a concern is raised and use good judgement to seek external expert advice when necessary.

In the small number of instances when pupils find it very difficult to manage their own behaviour you take robust but supportive steps to weigh the needs of individuals and the school community as a whole. On the rare occasions when pupils have made insensitive or discriminatory remarks, your records demonstrate that you have ensured that they are unlikely to be repeated. Pupils express confidence in staff to keep them safe and respond to any concerns they may have.

## Inspection findings

- Work seen in books and outcomes at the end of each key stage demonstrate that pupils make good progress from their starting points as a result of effective teaching. In the early years, the proportion of children securing a good level of development rose in 2015. Children now benefit from an improved outdoor area and effective guidance in the use of resources to develop their emerging skills. Girls still outperform boys and make better progress overall. However, recent information shows that these gaps are closing in most of the areas of learning.
- Pupils learn how to pursue their own lines of investigation in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers ensure that pupils move on to more sophisticated skills as soon as they are ready. For example, Year 4 pupils determine the melting point of different kinds of chocolate using a fair test. By Year 6, pupils are able to decide the most appropriate evidence to collect to check on the best conditions for plant growth. Leaders have listened to pupils' views as they have made improvements to the curriculum. For example, achievement in science is recorded in collaborative class books so that pupils can concentrate more on the practical aspects of lessons.
- The teaching of mathematics has been a focus for improvement. The more recent work completed by pupils demonstrates that teachers are providing more effective opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and select the most appropriate method of calculation. Pupils of all ability levels are growing more confident when talking about mathematics. The consultant who is working with leaders is clear about what must be done next so that standards in mathematics improve even further.
- Teachers, including those new to the school and at an early stage in their career, make sure pupils experience interesting lessons. The curriculum offers good opportunities for pupils to increase their understanding of the wider world. Pupils say that they enjoy their work and find the guidance teachers give them easy to understand.
- Newly qualified teachers receive very effective further training. Their mentor makes sure that they use this to develop their teaching skills rapidly.
- Members of staff say that they feel leaders do a good job of consulting them about plans for improvement. They appreciate the opportunity to suggest and try out ideas.
- Pupils in all classes are able to talk confidently about their work and express their opinions. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are typically exemplary. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online survey are positive about school's provision.
- Senior leaders keep detailed records of all instances of unacceptable behaviour and report this promptly to governors. Records show that these instances are rare, and are even more rarely repeated by the same pupils.
- The information for the current school year indicates that leaders need to continue their relentless drive to convince more parents to place a higher priority on ensuring that their children attend school more often.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the quality of the teaching of mathematics continues to improve so that pupils of all abilities deepen their understanding and make even better progress
- pupils' overall attendance is at least good
- senior leaders use their expertise to help all those with leadership responsibilities sharpen the evaluation of their plans for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for the London Borough of Sutton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Wright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection I held discussions with you and members of the senior leadership team. I met with a group of staff with different roles in the school. I also met four representatives of the governing body. I conducted a tour of the school with you and the consultant working with you to develop the teaching of mathematics. I met with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school. I also scrutinised a range of documents related to safeguarding and school improvement. I considered 71 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View) and a number of comments which parents submitted to Ofsted during the inspection.