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Miss S Critchell
Headteacher
Linton Mead Primary School
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Dear Miss Critchell

Short inspection of Linton Mead Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 September 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 it was found to be a good school in January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

You have been successful in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You are determined that pupils will understand the potential of education to transform their chances in life. This has enabled you to lead the school through some significant challenges. Leaders ignite a passion for learning in pupils who rely on their school to do this for them.

Senior leaders and governors were prompt and effective in responding to a downturn in standards in 2015. The appointment of new senior leaders has helped you to increase the pace of school improvement in the last year. Together, you have ensured that staff and governors are very clear about your priorities. You have been unequivocal, for instance, about the high standards of teaching you expect colleagues to exemplify. Those who have been unable to live up to these after additional support and training are no longer part of the school. They have been replaced by high-quality teachers who have been attracted to your school by its positive culture and good reputation. As a result, pupils' progress has recovered. For example, recent work of the most able pupils in mathematics demonstrates rapid progress. Teachers ensure that these pupils can learn a new concept and go on to apply it in a single lesson.

Your thorough analysis of information ensures that effective decisions are made about priorities for professional development. For example, senior leaders realised

that the way teachers were assessing pupils' progress needed to improve, particularly during lessons.

Middle leaders have become more effective in driving improvement since the last inspection. You are challenging them to use information even more sharply when checking on the impact of their work. For example, they are clear about the relative strengths and weaknesses in reading. Those who are responsible for other subjects benefit from the strong and effective support provided by your senior team. They are now pivotal in ensuring that pupils continue to make good progress in a wide range of subjects. However, you know that middle leaders do not always focus sharply enough on the short-term progress of groups who have encountered barriers to learning.

You have also ensured that the teaching of early reading skills in key stage 1 is skilful and consistently effective. You have asked leaders to conduct action research projects aimed at particular groups of pupils who have not made the same rate of progress as others in reading. This is helping leaders to think even more deeply about the impact of their work. It also provides clear evidence to help leaders hold teachers to account.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that staff and governors understand safeguarding policies and procedures, including those new to the school. Staff say they feel confident about recognising signs of abuse. They feel well informed about particular risks which your strong local knowledge tells you may be more prevalent in the wider community.

Checks on suitability of staff are recorded appropriately. Those responsible for administering them understand their crucial safeguarding role. You also insist that staff and governors read and understand changes in government advice about safeguarding soon after it is published. You have ensured that staff and governors have been thoroughly trained in fulfilling the 'Prevent' duty and assess risk related to radicalisation and extremism effectively. However, your vigilance in updating training and guidance and the timescales for doing this are not explained clearly enough in your existing policies.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' preparedness for managing their own safety in their current and future lives. You ensure that pupils learn how to recognise and speak up against discrimination. A wide range of activities link with the local community both during and outside the school day. This enables pupils to become motivated to adopt positive roles in their community.

Inspection findings

- You were quite rightly concerned about the dip in standards at the end of the 2014/15 academic year. The progress of pupils in key stage 2, particularly in mathematics, was weak. Pupils with low prior attainment in reading, writing

and mathematics made less progress than other pupils. We agreed that your response to this dip was a key line of enquiry to check if the school remains good. Your own information about assessment outcomes for 2016, and the work seen in pupils' books, indicate that progress has increased rapidly in the last school year. For example, the most able mathematicians now make rapid progress from their higher starting points across the whole school. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils.

- Outcomes over time since the last inspection indicate that the inconsistencies in teaching early reading at key stage 1 have been eradicated. Pupils make good progress as a result of effective reading lessons, an improved quality of texts and skilful phonics teaching. The transition from the Reception Year to Year 1 is skilfully managed. Teachers use information well to ensure that pupils immediately build on their prior learning.
- Pupils who read to the inspector were able to use their skills to pronounce unfamiliar words accurately. The most able readers heard could explain their preferences for a particular author or genre of book. Pupils of all abilities are provided with appropriate reading materials and support in lessons across the curriculum. During the inspector's tour of the school, the positive impact of additional adults in supporting pupils to use books in lessons was very evident. Pupils spoken to could explain how reading materials were helping them to learn. They appreciate your decision to introduce a wider range of higher quality and more challenging books in the past year.
- The school's own progress tracking information and outcomes at the end of the most recent school year demonstrate that previous differences between groups of pupils have diminished. For example, your information shows that pupils with lower prior attainment now typically make the same progress as other pupils. However, your evaluation and plans for improvement do not pinpoint this sharply enough. Governors spoken to had a strong knowledge of standards overall but their knowledge of the performance of different groups was more limited.
- Leaders have been successful in ensuring that assessment arrangements during lessons are more effective. You have provided further training and put in place effective systems to check on the accuracy of assessments. You have reorganised your support staff so that they can immediately help pupils whose progress is slowing. As a result, disadvantaged pupils have made similar progress to others in the past school year across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' work from the previous year across a range of subjects demonstrates that they make good progress, particularly in their knowledge and understanding. Work seen in books shows that teachers' expectations for all abilities are high. Middle leaders who are responsible for subjects use information effectively to decide on priorities. For example, the leader for computing is aware of a weakness in pupils' programming skills. She has persuaded you to invest in related training for teachers as a result. The leader for science knows that pupils' work in science demonstrates stronger progress in extending knowledge than on developing investigative skills. Pupils' most recent work shows signs that this is being addressed effectively.

- Examples of topics taught from the last school year, such as a project about apartheid in South Africa, underline how thoughtfully leaders consider the interests, needs and concerns of pupils when determining the curriculum. A vast range of activities which require pupils to work in the local community was also evident from displays and discussions with leaders. Senior leaders have continued to forge very strong partnerships with parents. The wide range of products on display which resulted from learning projects at home demonstrate your success in ensuring that parents play an active part in the educational work of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they use information about the short-term progress of key groups of pupils even more sharply to measure impact and reshape plans for pupils' learning
- their extensive use of local knowledge and commitment to responding to the most recent safeguarding guidance is defined more precisely in related school policies.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body and the director of children's services for The Royal London Borough of Greenwich. 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 other senior leaders about your plans for improvement and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I met with a group of middle leaders. I also had a meeting with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I conducted a tour of the school with members of the senior leadership team, looking at pupils' work, observing their learning and hearing them read. I conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work in mathematics, science and the humanities. I also scrutinised a range of documents related to safeguarding, behaviour and school improvement. I considered the responses of parents to the online Parent View questionnaire alongside the school's own parent survey information.