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Mrs Audrey Kendall
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Kendall

Short inspection of Leopold Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2017 with Gary Rawlings, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In 2013, the school expanded due to an influx of children moving to the area and now has a second site, Leopold Gwenneth Rickus. This site officially became part of Leopold School in January 2016.

You and senior leaders have managed this change extremely well. You have not backed away from the significant challenges thrown up by such rapid expansion and instead have embraced them. This is no small feat and is testament to your firm and strategic leadership. You have appointed a team of strong leaders who support you wholeheartedly and play a central role in the drive for improvement. Governors bring a broad range of expertise and experience to the leadership team and share your high expectations for the school.

Despite the distance between the two sites, leaders, teachers and pupils talk of 'two sites, one school' and you have ensured that the positive ethos of Leopold School is consistent across both sites. Pupils are hugely proud of their school and like having opportunities to work with each other across the sites, for example through the successful school choir. Leaders have ensured that staff work collaboratively across the school to share leadership, expertise, planning and good practice. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is of a high standard. Pupils' outcomes have dipped since the school's expansion but it is clear that your high standards have not.

Leaders have reviewed the school's effectiveness openly and honestly. Consequently, they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and have rightly prioritised areas for development. Leaders know that the new mathematics curriculum needs to be embedded across the school and that pupils need to be consistently challenged if they are to attain higher standards. They have set clear and realistic targets to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their background, leave Leopold School fully prepared for the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including the governing body, are well informed about the latest safeguarding requirements. They make sure that all staff receive regular and good-quality training, both internally and by external providers. This has helped to increase their understanding of matters such as radicalisation and female genital mutilation. The single central record of pre-employment checks is maintained well and leaders make regular checks to make sure that it meets requirements. Records of child protection and safeguarding concerns are detailed and actions are recorded meticulously.

Pupils say that they are happy and safe and parents agree with their views. Pupils abide by the motto 'ready, respectful, safe' and they speak highly of the care and attention teachers offer if any pupils have concerns. The team of psychotherapists also offers specialist support for individuals and small groups. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm and orderly.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' progress in reading and writing at key stage 2 is in line with or above national averages for all groups of pupils. However, in 2016, pupils' progress in mathematics was significantly below average. Leaders had already identified improvements in mathematics as a priority. For this reason, we agreed that this would be a key line of enquiry for the inspection.
- Leaders found that pupils were reaching key stage 2 with gaps in their mathematical knowledge and skills. In response they launched a new approach to teaching mathematics in Reception and Year 1. This is having a positive impact and will eventually be rolled out across the school. However, leaders decided on a number of short-term initiatives to address urgently the needs of pupils in key stage 2. These include 'maths meetings' every afternoon to build on that day's teaching, booster sessions for pupils at risk of underachieving and mathematical challenges for older pupils to compete with schools in the local area. Governors allocated part of the pupil premium funding to provide additional mathematics tuition for targeted pupils in Year 5 and Year 6.
- Your actions to improve outcomes for mathematics are having an impact.

Visits to classrooms and work in pupils' books confirmed that pupils are making better progress. Pupils talk enthusiastically about mathematics and are engaged and interested in their work. Current performance information indicates that rates of progress in mathematics are improving for all pupils, and leaders are working hard to address any areas of underachievement.

- The second key line of enquiry related to progress and attainment in key stage 1. In 2016, pupils' achievement was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with their attainment in early years, this implied that pupils had not made good progress by the end of Year 2.
- School leaders have analysed the 2016 outcomes in detail. More than half of the pupils in this cohort joined the school at various times in key stage 1 and with no prior attainment information. Leaders cope extremely well with the frequent changes in classes and track pupils' progress accurately from baseline assessments. They then put additional support in place to help individual pupils and small groups develop their basic numeracy and literacy skills. Leaders have also created a team of specialist staff to help pupils who speak English as an additional language and these pupils are making the strongest progress as a result. Teachers are committed to helping their pupils and regularly hold teaching sessions outside lessons for pupils who need extra support.
- Leaders are confident that outcomes in key stage 1 will improve this year in all subjects. Current pupils are making expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics and many are exceeding age-related expectations. Inspectors found that teaching and learning in key stage 1 has been strong over time, with well-chosen resources and effective questioning to deepen pupils' understanding.
- The final key line of enquiry we agreed to consider was attendance and persistent absence. Attendance overall has been below the national average in recent years and significantly so for some groups of pupils.
- Leaders are determined to improve the rate of attendance and have made inroads into this. Eye-catching displays across the school inform pupils and their families about the importance of regular school attendance. Pupils are keen to earn rewards for excellent attendance and 'soft starts' give parents extra time to drop off their children before lessons begin. The leadership team works closely with the education welfare officer and other agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils.
- Since the school's expansion, attendance has improved gradually, although it is still below average. Persistent absence is still relatively high, but it has greatly reduced for pupils with the highest absence rates. The leadership team knows that there is more work to do in improving the attendance of those who are frequently absent.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new approach to mathematics teaching is embedded so that it is consistently effective across the school
- the attendance level improves even further and persistent absence continues to decline.

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

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspectors carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with the headteacher and the senior leadership team, including meetings with phase leaders, the subject leader for mathematics and those responsible for attendance
- a meeting with the leaders for safeguarding and a review of documentation linked to safeguarding
- a discussion with three governors, including the chair of the governing body
- a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority
- visits to classes in Years 1 to 6 to scrutinise teaching and learning over time and to listen to pupils reading
- conversations with pupils in lessons and looking at their work
- conversations with pupils in the playground
- evaluation of recent information about current pupils' progress and attainment
- analysis of up-to-date attendance figures
- scrutiny of a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and minutes of governors' meetings
- analysis of the 97 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 20 responses to the staff survey.