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Mrs Hina Shah
Earlsmead Primary School
Broad Lane
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Dear Mrs Shah

Short inspection of Earlsmead Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 2017, 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 June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Governors appointed you as headteacher in November 2015. In a short space of time, you established your new senior leadership team and started to analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses. It became clear that teachers, especially at key stage 2, had not been effectively trained to deliver the revised national curriculum and, as a result, pupils fell behind others of their age. In the 2016 Year 6 tests, pupils' standards in reading and mathematics were low, owing to the legacy of teaching not being challenging enough to meet the expectations of the new national curriculum. You have corrected this situation and, as a leadership team, are implementing change effectively. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving and current pupils are making good progress. You are not complacent and you have plans to continue to secure consistently good or better teaching across the year groups and subjects.

You ensure that all members of staff are committed to your vision of creating a community of lifelong learners. There is a strong drive to enable pupils to succeed academically and to experience a wide range of enrichment activities that make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers, too, are keen to improve their own effectiveness. They share best practice in the school and increasingly collaborate with colleagues in other schools. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and leading to better outcomes for pupils.

Since the previous inspection, performance in reading, writing and mathematics has continued to be good in the early years and at key stage 1. There has been a concerted effort to raise standards in writing across the key stages. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in writing in the 2016 Year 6 tests was nine percentage points above the national average. You are aware that more needs to be done to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school. The headteacher and seven other leaders are trained as designated safeguarding leads. They ensure that members of staff receive regular training and frequent updates. Members of staff are encouraged to report any concerns and always to err on the side of caution. This means that all members of staff are well aware of potential risks and leaders quickly take appropriate action when any concerns arise.

Leaders work with a range of agencies, such as social services and the local authority safeguarding team, to ensure pupils' welfare and safety. There is a strong focus in the curriculum on a range of safety issues, including e-safety and the use of social media. Similarly, leaders provide workshops for parents on how to keep their children safe. This means that pupils understand how to stay safe in different situations.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

Inspection findings

- I explored how well leaders are improving outcomes in reading at key stage 2. The 2016 assessments show that at the end of Year 6, all groups of pupils made slow progress in reading and therefore reached standards well below those found nationally.
- Leaders introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading comprehension. They organised extensive training and more recently engaged a specialist consultant to provide ongoing support to teachers. Furthermore, they introduced effective assessment tools that help teachers and leaders quickly identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. This information is used well to help teachers plan teaching and organise intervention groups to help address any gaps. Leaders have created a vibrant library and home reading is actively encouraged. They have also increased the amount of time spent on teaching reading. Pupils, mainly in Year 6, attend many catch-up sessions to help them reach higher standards. As a result, pupils of all abilities across key stage 2 are making good progress overall. The school's information showing pupils' attainment demonstrates that 90% of the current Year 6 cohort are working at age-related expectations or above. Current performance in other year groups, although good, is not as strong, particularly in Year 4.
- I also looked at how well leaders are driving improvements in mathematics at key stage 2. The 2016 assessments show that at the end of Year 6, standards

reached in mathematics were below average overall, mainly because boys' performance was considerably weaker than girls' performance, which was broadly average.

- Leaders identified the need to focus on improving pupils' skills in fractions, percentages, problem solving and reasoning. Leaders and teachers embarked on a training programme to enhance their mathematical teaching skills. As with reading, leaders introduced effective assessment tools. These help teachers and leaders identify precisely the gaps in each pupil's mathematical skills. Teachers adapt their plans accordingly. Every Year 6 pupil attends additional small-group sessions, including the most able. Furthermore, pupils frequently do a range of online tests. These help pupils to practise their problem-solving skills. Assessment information shows that 88% of Year 6 pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations or above. A slightly higher proportion of these are boys, thus reversing last year's gender gap. Current overall performance in other year groups, although good overall, shows that girls are still outperforming boys in Year 3 and Year 5.
- I considered how well you are improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. While performance last year in writing at the end of key stage 2 was broadly average, it was below average in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test.
- Leaders introduced weekly teaching sessions focusing on spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG). They have acquired new workbooks to support pupils' learning. In addition, pupils do weekly online testing of their SPAG skills. Teachers use the results of this work well to plan their next steps in teaching. There is a greater emphasis this year on ensuring that pupils edit and correct their work. Evidence in workbooks and writing exercise books confirms pupils are now applying their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills more effectively to their writing and are on track to reach the expected standards.
- Last year, overall absence and persistent absence rates increased to above the national averages. Leaders have taken effective action to reduce these rates of absence. A learning mentor now calls home on every day that a pupil is absent. Leaders now work more closely with external agencies, such as the education welfare officer and family support service, to encourage parents in ensuring that their children regularly attend school.
- As a result, absence figures from the start of the autumn term to date are lower, including for groups, than they were during the last academic year. The overall absence rate is close to the national average for primary schools. Persistent absence has reduced to below last year's national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- outcomes in reading, mathematics and English spelling, punctuation and grammar are consistently good across the school and for all groups of pupils
- teachers continue to develop their skills in delivering consistently high-quality teaching in reading and mathematics, so that the need for catch-up sessions reduces.

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

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspector carried out the following activities during the inspection:

- meetings with senior leaders, the leader of literacy, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and other members of staff
- joint visits to classrooms with the headteacher
- a range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' self-evaluation, information about outcomes for groups of pupils, policy documentation, attendance records and information about safeguarding
- listened to a group of pupils read and conducted a scrutiny of pupils' work
- considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 49 responses to the pupil survey and 44 responses to the questionnaire for staff.