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Mrs Kim Custis
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Custis

Short inspection of Little Heath Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 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 October 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Leaders' work to improve teaching in English and mathematics is proving effective. However, the quality of teaching in other subjects is more variable. Leaders of these subjects have a limited understanding of strengths and areas that need improvement. You recognise that subject leadership needs development. However, leaders do not have a clear strategy in place to bring this about.

Typically, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make reasonable progress. However, they are not making the strong progress needed to catch up from previous underachievement. Leaders are adjusting the way additional funding is used to help resolve this issue. Some recently introduced out-of-class support programmes are helping these pupils make better progress than was previously the case. Nevertheless, you recognise that class teaching is not meeting the needs of these pupils consistently well enough.

Pupils report that they enjoy school and feel safe. Typically, they work hard and behave well. Pupils are kind and show respect to one another. They are clear that pupils from any background would be welcome in their class.

Parents and carers have mixed views about the quality of leadership and communication with the school. Most parents report a positive experience. However, a

few parents expressed some discontent. Governors report some success in supporting leaders to resolve parental concerns. Wisely, the governing body is considering what else it can do to gain the confidence of those parents who remain dissatisfied.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Checks on the suitability of staff are sound. All staff are fully aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They are alert to any sign a child may need help or protection. Clear, well-understood processes are in place for reporting concerns. You make effective use of the secure electronic referral and record-keeping system introduced last summer. This has heightened the efficiency with which you keep track of any pupil who may be vulnerable and ensures that suitable, helpful support is in place. When necessary, you work well with other agencies such as social services to ensure that pupils and their families receive effective support. Governors make sure that safeguarding arrangements are effective through regular audits.

Inspection findings

- In recent years, pupils' progress in mathematics has been too variable. Encouragingly, teaching in mathematics is improving. Teachers make good use of assessment to set work of suitable challenge for pupils of differing abilities. Teachers' use of questioning helps pupils explain their thinking and develop their mathematical reasoning skills. Pupils are gaining increasing confidence in applying their mathematical thinking to explore and solve problems. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of this improved teaching on pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make consistently good progress. Leaders have adjusted the way they use additional funding to improve the situation. Staff training has highlighted the importance of ensuring that these pupils' needs are routinely well met in class. Leaders have introduced some new 'out-of-class' support sessions to help pupils who are behind to catch up. The leader responsible has set up a useful system for recording and evaluating the support each pupil receives. Initiatives such as the reading programme are proving effective. However, school information shows that although pupils are typically not falling further behind, very few are making the rapid progress needed to catch up.
- Leaders have not paid enough attention to the quality of curriculum planning for subjects such as science, history, geography, modern foreign languages, design and technology and art. Leaders have not defined expectations for what pupils should achieve in each topic or made sure that each topic builds on the previous one. As a result, teachers' expectations for what pupils should achieve are not routinely high enough and teaching is not consistently effective.
- Subject leaders typically have a limited understanding of the quality of teaching in the subject they are responsible for. Senior leaders have identified that subject leadership needs development. However, the school's self-evaluation and development plan lack clarity on what needs to improve and how this will be

achieved. More positively, leaders have recently defined what pupils will be assessed on in each subject and year. This provides a helpful starting point for subject leaders' work to improve curriculum planning and teaching. However, leaders have not determined the next steps for this work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching and support enable disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities to catch up and make consistently good progress
- teaching consistently builds pupils' skills and knowledge so that they achieve well across the curriculum
- improvements in teaching in mathematics result in pupils making consistently strong progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Diana Choulerton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and the deputy headteacher at the start of the day. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness and agreed the key areas we would focus on during the inspection. During the day, I held further discussions with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with six members of the governing body including the co-chairs. I also met with other leaders and spoke with staff, pupils and parents. I made short visits to lessons, with you, to look at pupils' learning in mathematics and the wider curriculum. We also jointly scrutinised a selection of pupils' work. I took account of 17 staff survey responses and 60 responses to the pupil survey. I also took account of 70 responses by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 37 free-text responses. I held a short meeting with a representative from the local authority. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' checks on pupils' progress, and safeguarding policies and procedures.