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Miss Aimee Garner
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Dear Miss Garner

Short inspection of Leverington Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 24 May 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 November 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. Although you only took on the role of headteacher in September 2017, you knew the school very well from your previous leadership role as assistant headteacher at the school. This has contributed to the continuation of the school's good provision. You are ably supported by your assistant headteacher, who was a middle leader at the school prior to her appointment in September 2017.

Along with these changes in leadership, the school joined the Diamond Learning Partnership Trust in September 2017. The trust has been effective in supporting and challenging you and your staff. For example, the trust's challenge partner makes regular visits to the school to review the success of leaders' actions and identify the school's next priorities. You ensure that your staff make full use of training opportunities with other schools within the trust to develop their skills, further improve the quality of teaching and, consequently, enhance pupils' learning experiences.

You and your assistant headteacher work well together. You have different skills, and these complement each other well. You share the same motivation to continually move the school forward. Your shared expectations are that every child at Leverington Primary Academy will learn well and succeed. You have taken considerable action to address this aim and ensure that staff are working towards the same vision. You are resilient and uncompromising in holding teachers accountable for pupils' achievement. For example, you have introduced a revised

appraisal system and have regular meetings with each teacher to discuss the progress that the pupils in their class are making. Teaching assistants also have professional development meetings to discuss the training opportunities they need to carry out their roles effectively. The vast majority of staff realise the benefit of this approach in raising pupils' achievement. This is reflected in the views of the 16 staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire. Almost all of them agree that the school is led and managed well. Staff stated that they enjoy working at the school and feel well supported to achieve the best for the pupils in their care.

Pupils behave very well at Leverington Primary Academy, which they describe as a 'welcoming school'. They are polite, friendly and good mannered. Children get off to a good start in the early years provision and, throughout their time at school, pupils appreciate their teachers and teaching assistants who make sure that they 'learn different subjects in a fun way'. Older pupils enjoy the extra responsibilities they are given, for example, reading and playing with the younger pupils and organising different school events. In this way, pupils successfully uphold the school's motto, 'Caring, sharing, thinking, learning.'

The majority of parents and carers are pleased with the school. Many who provided responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, spoke about the hard-working staff and the good progress their children make. One parent's comment was typical of many: 'All staff are excellent, friendly, professional and approachable.' Another parent said: 'The communication from the school is wonderful: we always know what our child has been doing every week. Staff are always available and, more importantly, willing to make time and talk about any concerns we may have.'

An area for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection was to ensure that pupils make strong progress in mathematics and that more pupils reach the higher standards. You have attended to this area by providing training for staff and strengthening the mathematics curriculum. Leaders have ensured that staff have higher expectations of what pupils should achieve, and there is now a more consistent teaching approach in place across the school. Pupils are encouraged to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in all key stages. This is beginning to support pupils to access the higher standards. However, you have identified that the newly introduced approaches need to be firmly in place across the school to ensure that more pupils reach the higher standards that they should.

Safeguarding is effective.

In your role as school's designated safeguarding leads, you and your assistant headteacher have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and there is a strong safeguarding culture at the school.

Staff recognise and embrace their responsibilities to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. They have received up-to-date training. You involve external agencies as appropriate and are tenacious in following up referrals. Records are detailed and of high quality. All required checks take place when new staff are appointed.

Leaders' work is further strengthened by the trust, which conducts additional monitoring activities to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils said that they feel happy, safe and settled in school. They told me that they know how to keep safe, for example, when using the internet. Pupils also said that bullying is rare, and if it does happen staff quickly sort it out. They confidently stated that they can talk to any adult in the school about any worries they may have.

Almost all parents who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe in school.

Inspection findings

- In order to check whether the school remains good, I followed a number of lines of enquiry. I considered the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils in the school. I wanted to find out whether the additional government funding for these pupils is spent well so that pupils make the best possible progress. You know that, in 2016 and 2017, disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Additionally, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils was below that of other pupils in the school and the national average.
- The achievement of these pupils is a priority in your improvement plans. Leaders and governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Any barriers to learning for those disadvantaged pupils who are underachieving are swiftly identified. Appropriate interventions and support are effectively put in place to address their learning and well-being needs. The disadvantaged pupils I spoke to during the inspection were confident, happy and fully engaged in their lessons.
- You and your leaders are aware of the need to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, and you have rigorous procedures to establish the reasons for any pupil's absence. You and your staff are quick to address attendance issues: for example, through staff contacting parents when pupils do not turn up for school. Your focused actions are having a positive impact, and the attendance figures for disadvantaged pupils are improving and moving closer to the national average.
- Work in pupils' books shows that the additional support that has been devised for disadvantaged pupils is having a positive impact, as there is clear progress. The school's current assessment information demonstrates that disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress across the school. However, you have rightly identified that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils still need to reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Another line of enquiry focused on how well you and your leaders ensure that the needs of middle-attaining pupils and most-able pupils are being met, so that they make strong progress and attain the higher standards in reading, writing and

mathematics. This is because outcomes in 2016 and 2017 show that the proportions of pupils attaining greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and the higher standards at the end of Year 6, varied and sometimes were below the national average. You have correctly identified that middle-attaining pupils are at times not challenged to reach their potential because teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve have been too low.

- Leaders have more recently introduced a range of effective support to help pupils to achieve well. Through staff training, you are challenging teachers to plan opportunities to encourage pupils to think independently and learn in a variety of ways. Teachers provide guidance and prompts for learning, which are displayed in all classrooms for pupils to use in their lessons. During our joint observations of lessons, we saw pupils provided with a range of challenging tasks that motivated them to think for themselves and make their own choices. Teachers often used targeted questioning effectively to probe pupils' deeper understanding and support their progress.
- When I met with a group of pupils, they spoke enthusiastically about how staff challenge them and help them to think deeply in most of their lessons. They told me that the teachers and teaching assistants 'challenge your knowledge to the limit'. They also commented that the guidance on their classroom walls 'is really useful. If you are stuck, you go there and there's lots of things to help you.' Work in their books demonstrates that the most able pupils are routinely given tasks that are suitably demanding for them.
- Finally, I explored what leaders are doing to ensure that boys are achieving well in reading and writing, compared to girls. This is because published results in 2016 and 2017 for the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2 show that boys did not achieve as well as girls in these two subjects. The differences in achievement in mathematics between boys and girls were less marked.
- You and your leaders have set about changing the culture of the school so that boys' interest in their learning is maintained and their resilience improves. We discussed how both teaching and the curriculum are being adapted to inspire boys, while at the same time ensuring that girls continue to benefit from the school's high-quality provision.
- The boys I met with spoke about enjoying their learning and finding it interesting. They told me that they particularly like the themes based around different books and that the tasks they are given are 'great fun and just about right'. The school's current assessment information and work in pupils' books demonstrate that the differences between the achievement of boys and girls in reading and writing have reduced considerably across the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they increase the proportion of disadvantaged pupils that reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 and key

stage 2

- a greater proportion of middle-attaining pupils reach greater depth and the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing board, the chief executive officer of the trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with you and your assistant headteacher, I visited lessons across the school. I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke informally with pupils. I met with you and your assistant headteacher to discuss progress since the previous inspection. We also discussed outcomes for children and pupils and the impact of decisions leaders have made. I spoke to the chair of the board of trustees on the telephone and met with a member of the local governing board. I met the chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy CEO of the trust, as well as the school's challenge partner, to discuss their work with the school. I also met with a group of pupils more formally to talk about their school experience.

I scrutinised a variety of sources of information including: the school's development plan; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; your records of monitoring and evaluation; reports of governor visits; and the school's assessment information for all year groups. I also scrutinised the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, the records of checks leaders make on the suitability of staff to work with children and information relating to attendance. A discussion was held with you and your assistant headteacher, as the school's designated safeguarding leads. I took into account 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 34 free-text responses from parents. I also analysed the 24 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, and the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.