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Mr David Ball
Principal
Eastcote Primary Academy
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Dear Mr Ball

Short inspection of Eastcote Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 March 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have worked with the Leigh Academies Trust, staff, governors and pupils to create a very welcoming school where pupils enjoy learning and feel well supported. It is clear that pupils enjoy coming to this school. Attendance is above average. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to the school's values of 'Aspire, Learn, Love'. Parents and carers appreciate recent innovations including competitive sport and a house points system. One parent, speaking for many, said, 'The new house system is excellent in promoting teamwork and healthy competition.'

Your evaluation of the performance of the school is accurate. Improvement planning focuses on priorities which are shared with and understood by all staff and governors. Since the previous inspection, you and your leadership team have worked hard to improve all aspects of provision. You are keen to ensure that the pupils enjoy learning and benefit from interesting and well-planned lessons across a range of subjects. The curriculum is enriched by interesting visits, visitors and after-school clubs.

Pupils are eager to learn; their enthusiasm to ask questions begins in the early years and continues as they progress through the school. Pupils are polite and courteous, work extremely well together and support each other during their lessons and on the playground. They are proud of their work and eager to talk about their achievements. Pupils' conduct and behaviour around the school help to maintain a calm and happy environment.

The trust and the local governing body provide you with support and robustly hold you to account. Governors know the school very well, are committed to their role within the community and are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors keep their knowledge and skills up to date through regular training. They use their skills to provide the right level of challenge for leaders.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been tackled effectively. Standards continue to improve because you have provided a curriculum that is appropriately challenging and teaching that is of a consistently high standard. The early years setting gives children a very good start to their education; by the end of Reception, an above-average proportion of children achieve a good level of development. There has been a three-year increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check. By the end of key stage 1, pupils exceed national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In the last two years, standards have risen significantly by the end of key stage 2; in 2017 Eastcote Primary Academy was in the top 20% of schools in the country for the progress made by pupils in reading and mathematics. However, there is more to do to ensure that a higher proportion of pupils in key stage 1 reach the greater depth standard in mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils feel safe in your school. Pupils said that bullying is rare but, if it does happen, they have absolute confidence that staff will help them resolve any issues. One pupil said, 'Adults are always on the watch to help you.' Parents said that their children are very well looked after while they are at school. You have a thorough approach to safeguarding and train staff well. When you need to take action to support pupils, you do so quickly and persevere with external agencies so that pupils get the support they need.

You ensure that records about safeguarding are well ordered and thorough. You are effectively promoting a culture of safeguarding. Pupils told me that they appreciate lessons and assemblies on e-safety, fire and road safety, dealing with strangers and bicycle safety. You prepare pupils for their transfer to secondary school, providing them with age-appropriate information which includes sex education.

Inspection findings

- I pursued three lines of enquiry to ascertain whether the school continues to be good. My first question related to the progress of most-able pupils in writing and whether teaching provides them with an appropriate level of challenge. In 2017, within a broadly positive picture overall, the proportion of most-able Year 6 pupils attaining the greater depth standard was a little below the national average.
- Leaders have improved the quality of the English curriculum, which has been designed to prioritise pupils' interests and motivation. The resulting rich and exciting curriculum is a key strength of the school and a catalyst to the rapid improvement of standards. Leaders have also improved teaching through a combination of effective training and individual support. Additionally, improved use of assessment information has raised expectations and enabled staff quickly to identify underachievement.
- These changes have benefited all pupils, but particularly the most able. The writing seen in lessons and pupils' books, across key stage 2, shows strong progress. This is also reflected in the school's 2018 teacher assessments.
- Second, I focused on the progress of pupils in mathematics at key stage 1. In 2017, a lower proportion of pupils than found nationally made sufficient progress from 'expected' starting points to reach the 'greater depth' standard.
- You acted swiftly to address this, appointing a new mathematics subject leader. The curriculum has been revised, with a new calculation policy to ensure a common approach across the school. Staff have been supported in approaches to mathematics teaching to bring about improved consistency.
- Teachers' assessments in 2018 reflect some acceleration in pupils' progress. However, while pupils' books show some evidence of greater challenge, there are also times when they repeat work that they have already mastered.
- Finally, I considered the broader picture of improvement in pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6. Since 2016, standards across the school have risen dramatically.
- You implemented a new curriculum which aimed to raise expectations, with a particular focus on pupils' enjoyment and engagement. In particular, the English and mathematics curriculums were revised and supported through the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills through all subjects. An effect of this has been that pupils have opportunities to write for many different purposes. This includes, for example, writing to accompany the running of pupil committees. You introduced rigour into the use of assessment information to identify underachievement, with rapid action taken to address it.
- Pupils' books reflect high-quality work across all subjects; pupils take a pride in their books and are well motivated to do their best. There is evidence that the new texts that they are using have raised expectations. Their books also show stronger development of skills, including research skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- raise teachers' expectations in mathematics for the pupils in key stage 1, by ensuring that pupils are challenged in every lesson and that there is no unnecessary repetition of work that they have already mastered.

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

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, middle leaders, and members of the local governing body, your leadership team and a representative of the trust. We discussed the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress and improvements made since the previous inspection. Together, we visited classes in all year groups and looked at a range of pupils' work in books. I met with pupils to talk to them about their experience of school life and how safe they feel. I analysed a range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documentation, the current progress data, documents relating to safeguarding and the school curriculum. I visited a lunchtime club and observed children at play on the school field. I took account of the views of the 48 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, their written comments, and the views of parents who spoke to me before the start of the school day. I also took account of the views of members of staff and pupils who I met during the day.