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Catherine Lester
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Dear Mrs Lester

Short inspection of Cheam Fields Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 30 January 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2016.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You continue to provide the school with stability and strong leadership. Since joining LEO Academy Trust, you have forged strong links which have further strengthened leadership, staff development and the curriculum. Governors work together effectively to ensure that key priorities are addressed. They know the school well and fulfil their statutory duties in a professional and timely manner.

You have developed leadership at all levels. You have ensured that senior and middle leaders know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Strong subject leaders ensure that priorities are addressed. Senior leaders routinely check that pupils are meeting targets and making progress. You have developed a mentoring approach to professional development across the school. Staff are positive and feel they are helped to achieve well. They feel valued and are committed to further improvement.

Pupils are courteous and behave well towards each other. They achieve highly, and demonstrate positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning. Parents and carers typically describe staff as caring and approachable. They appreciate their hard work and commitment.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Detailed, high-quality records are kept. Leaders work well with other professionals to support vulnerable pupils. Staff regularly receive statutory training. They understand what to do if they have concerns, and know their statutory responsibilities. Governors have ensured that effective recruitment systems are in place, and regularly audit safeguarding systems to ensure that they are robust.

Pupils report that they feel safe in school and bullying is not an issue. They are confident that they can report any concerns or worries they might have to an adult. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online and in the wider community.

Inspection findings

- We first agreed to look at the effectiveness of leaders' actions to develop pupils' writing. We identified this because, since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 has not been as strong as in reading or mathematics. We found that teachers use high-quality reading texts to engage pupils and develop their writing skills. This strategy has been very successful in encouraging pupils to use a variety of complex vocabulary in their writing.
- Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities for extended writing. Pupils use features such as similes, adjectives and rhetorical questions to make their writing more interesting and engaging. Pupils' handwriting is typically neat and well formed. However, a minority of lower-ability pupils do not develop their writing as well as they could because they have not sufficiently developed their pencil grip. This limits their ability to write fluently.
- Resources are provided to support writing development. Learning walls of pupils' work and model examples show pupils how to use grammatical structures correctly. Pupils report that they find this useful in helping them remember what to do, or to check if they get stuck and need help. Teachers also provide writing checklists in books for pupils. Some pupils use these well; however, others, particularly those who lack confidence in writing, find them overwhelming as they contain too many structures to include in their writing.
- Teachers' guidance helps pupils edit and improve their writing in English books. There is clear evidence that pupils make progress over time. They are getting better at using language structures, vocabulary and punctuation, and can demonstrate their understanding across a range of genres. There are opportunities for pupils to write in a range of subjects across the curriculum. When writing in subjects other than English, teachers' expectations are not always as high, particularly with regard to spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able pupils, do not produce writing of the same high standard, across the curriculum.
- Next, we looked at how leaders' actions ensure that boys' outcomes are as high as they can be. This was because boys' outcomes have not been as strong as

girls' outcomes across the school. Leaders identified the need to strengthen boys' progress and improve their outcomes in a range of subjects. They have implemented and adapted the curriculum to better engage and motivate boys. This has been successful. Boys and girls typically told me that they enjoyed the topics they study. Trips and visitors are used effectively to enhance learning.

- In some year groups, significant work has been done to develop skills, such as listening and concentration. Leaders described the improvement over time in pupils' learning behaviours, and inspectors observed this during the inspection. Pupils report that lessons are calm and orderly, and their peers do not disrupt learning. Pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss their learning and collaborate on their tasks. However, some boys are over-reliant on their peers and adults for support. Many pupils are clear and articulate speakers; however, some boys are over-reliant on girls to talk for them and answer questions aloud.
- Finally, we looked at leaders' actions to develop mathematics. We identified this because, since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement in mathematics has improved significantly. There were many strengths in this area. There is a real 'buzz' in mathematics lessons. All pupils are engaged and spoke positively about their learning, describing mathematics as being 'fun'. Pupils show pride in their progress and could talk confidently about their ability to improve still further. Pupils relate success in mathematics to the world of work, and know that this skill will help them later in life.
- Leaders have ensured that challenge is used both to consolidate and extend learning. Work in books show that pupils move on when they have developed a clear understanding, and not before. A focus on mental mathematics has ensured that pupils are developing the use of multiplication tables and number bonds quickly and accurately. Pupils report that they enjoy being challenged in mathematics. Their resilience is evident as they do not give up when they cannot quickly solve problems.
- Pupils enjoy the structure of mathematics lessons, saying that they are kept busy and have to think hard. Leaders have developed the use of manipulatives (hands-on objects) across the school. Using these resources helps pupils develop their mathematical thinking. It also allows teachers to quickly assess understanding and target challenge and support appropriately. One pupil told me that using these resources has helped him visualise big numbers when problem-solving because, 'I close my eyes and I can see it.'
- Teachers have high expectations in mathematics. They ask target questions and encourage pupils to discuss their work and explain the methods they use. As a result, pupils quickly learn which methods to apply to a range of problems. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong, and they use questions effectively to help pupils make links and spot patterns. Pupils' reasoning skills are very strong. Teachers are excellent language role models, and use mathematical vocabulary well. As a result, even the youngest pupils can explain their thoughts and ideas using mathematical language correctly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations in writing are consistently high in all subjects
- lower-ability pupils are helped to develop their fluency in writing
- the proportion of boys working above the national standards is increased by developing their independence.

I am copying this letter to 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 Sutton. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Lou Anderson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings were held with you, members of the leadership team and subject leaders for mathematics and English. I also met with members of the governing body and trust. I undertook learning walks in all year groups from Years 1 to 6, alongside senior leaders. I scrutinised books alongside leaders. I reviewed the school's documentation, including for safeguarding and checked the single central record of staff checks. I met with pupils during a formal meeting, in classrooms and during playtimes to gather their views. I met parents at the start of the day to consider their views about the school, and considered 52 parental responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, 14 staff responses and 18 pupil responses.