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Miss Leigh Culyer and Miss Whittington
Executive Headteacher and Head of School
Beam Primary School
Oval Road North
Dagenham
Essex
RM10 9ED

Dear Miss Culyer

Short inspection of Beam Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 March 2016 with Christopher Christofides, Ofsted Inspector, 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 May 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You and the senior leadership team have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Your exemplary leadership has galvanised senior and middle leaders into a highly effective team. As a result of your exceptionally strong leadership, pupils' progress throughout the school continues to be good. Pupils' attainment on leaving the school at the end of Year 6 in 2015 was above that seen nationally. The areas that were identified for improvement during the previous inspection have been effectively addressed, especially the implementation of the school's policy on marking pupils' work.

The school has made year-on-year improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The drive and enthusiasm of the senior leadership team has ensured that the recent changes in the teaching staff have not slowed improvements down. It has been acknowledged by senior leaders that the quality of some teaching is being improved in the few classes where the standards of teaching fall below those of your high expectations.

The youngest pupils have a good start to the school in the early years. Their progress is rapid and the strong leadership of the deputy headteacher ensures that the needs of all the youngest pupils are met extremely well. Pupils' progress is checked by middle and senior leaders who hold teachers to account for the learning of each pupil. To this end, the school has made sure that the progress of

disadvantaged pupils has increased rapidly. In the recent past, not all of the most-able pupils have achieved as well as they could. Senior leaders and governors are aware of this and have put in place secure strategies, particularly to support the most able mathematicians and writers. Information about individual pupils' progress is gathered rigorously and shared with all the teaching staff to make sure they can use it to plan lessons. The governing body is supportive and knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well.

The school has many strengths. One of them is its position in the community. The school is much larger than most primary schools, but senior leaders have created an atmosphere of care, informality and friendliness usually found in the best of small schools. Parents cannot speak highly enough of what the school does for both their children and families. You are rightly seen as an approachable and caring leader who inspires pupils, staff and families in equal measure. Another strength is how the school supports the many pupils who speak English as an additional language. An increasing number of pupils in this group are from families that are new arrivals to Britain. The systems and support the school has in place mean that pupils become fluent in English very quickly and are encouraged to work alongside their classmates from the start. Your leadership has also ensured that the school remains a beacon of harmony and tolerance as it welcomes pupils and families from different backgrounds.

Your role as executive headteacher has also had a successful impact on a neighbouring primary school to which Beam is federated. I note that this school improved from special measures to good under your leadership. Beam's reach can also be seen at an international level. Children and staff talk proudly of the work being done to build and develop a 'Beam School' in Ghana through fund raising and exchange visits.

Safeguarding is effective.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are well-managed. All leaders are aware of their responsibilities and treat child protection as a high priority. Training for the most up-to-date strategies and guidance are in place, including the 'Prevent' duty, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Links with the appropriate agencies are strong and records and information are assiduously kept. Attendance has improved each year and is now above average overall. The attendance of some pupils, for example those from families who are recent arrivals to Britain, has been low. The very high levels of understanding and trust built between the school and the families have made sure that these pupils' and thus overall attendance is improving.

Pupils told inspectors that the school helped them feel safe. Many pupils were adamant that bullying was exceedingly rare and if it did happen it would be dealt with swiftly. Parents, who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were of the opinion that the school keeps children safe and bullying is tackled effectively.

Inspection findings

- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching well and work closely with staff to improve their practice. Senior leaders do not shy away from tackling underperformance and the small number of lessons that are less effective are known to them. Additional resources and staffing are in place to ensure that pupils' progress does not slow down while weaker teaching is being tackled, either formally or through specific training. Governors are ambitious about securing the best teaching possible.
- Middle leaders play a significant role in holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make by providing senior leaders with reports on pupils' progress, and on the quality of teaching gathered through lesson observations and checking pupils' work.
- Pupils make good progress in different subjects whatever their starting points. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Long before registration starts, pupils are seen running into school because of their enthusiasm for learning.
- By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment are above the national average. Current information about pupils' achievement and work seen in lessons confirm that the strong progress and above average attainment seen in previous years continues. The most-able pupils were observed planning and editing complex texts in Year 6 English lessons. Year 4 pupils were being challenged and stretched in their use of rapid recall in mental arithmetic.
- Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes, for indoor and outdoor learning, is exciting and stimulating. Staff work closely with parents and provide them with detailed and informative information about how their children are developing and learning.
- The school uses the funding for pupil premium highly effectively. Leaders' assessments of how the funding is used make sure that activities and resources are well targeted to support disadvantaged pupils. This can be seen in the additional support pupils receive to ensure they keep up with their classmates. The gaps between the groups have narrowed quickly and the information on current pupils' progress indicates that there is very little difference between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are provided with specialist support and make good progress throughout the school. Bespoke programmes are designed for individuals and groups of pupils to make sure they become fluent in English as quickly as possible. Inspectors observed pupils in lessons who were working confidently, with adult support and independently.
- The curriculum is a significant strength of the school. In addition to a very wide range of subjects on offer during the school day, extra-curricular clubs take place during lunchtimes and after school. These clubs include art, musical

instrument lessons and sports. Some clubs are run twice because of demand.

- Pupils' transition from Reception to Key Stage 1 and later into Key Stage 2 is smooth and uninterrupted because of the well-planned sharing of information between staff which is overseen by middle and senior leaders. This effective transition enables pupils to continue making good progress without missing a beat.
- Inspectors agree with the high levels of praise the school receives from visitors and members of the public about how well pupils behave both around school, in lessons and on school trips. The staff have worked hard to ensure that there are common expectations of attitudes to learning and that positive, friendly relationships are seen at all times. Records show that there are no permanent exclusions and short-term exclusions are very rare. Pupils speak proudly of how everyone gets on well with each other. Parents who met with inspectors and responded to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) also had a positive view on behaviour.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well managed. The provision includes small group work and additional adult support during lessons. The effective use of additional funding for those pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan ensures that pupils make good progress, equal to their peers.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the small proportion of less effective teaching is improved to be in line with the school's own expectations of no teaching being less than good.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors met with you, the senior leadership team, middle leaders and teachers. There were formal meetings with representatives of the governing body and the local authority's senior primary adviser. A range of information was looked at including the school's safeguarding records, policies and procedures and the single

central register. Inspectors read documents about the school's assessment of its performance, minutes of meetings and information about pupils' achievement. Groups of pupils from different year groups were interviewed and inspectors spoke informally to pupils at other times. Lessons were visited, including English, mathematics and art. Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to Parent View, met informally with parents and looked at the staff survey.