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Mrs Sarah Woodward
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Woodward

Short inspection of Little Leigh Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 22 June 2017, 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 July 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are a motivated and passionate headteacher who cares deeply about the staff and pupils in your school. Your drive and ambition is shared by governors and your highly effective senior leadership team. One parent described this as 'infectious, positive energy'. As a result, the school is going from strength to strength. The vision that governors have set for the school is ensuring that pupils receive a strong and balanced curriculum that actively engages pupils in exciting topics.

Pupils are proud to be part of your school. They are welcomed into busy, purposeful classes that brim with energy. Artefacts and displays are used to bring pupils' learning alive. Pupils are positive about their school and have great pride in their work. They are articulate, mature and a credit to their parents and the school.

The school has addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection successfully by ensuring that pupils have opportunities to research topics and find things out for themselves. For example, in Year 3, pupils used iPads to find facts about the River Ganges in one of their religious education lessons. Previously, inspectors also asked the school to raise the standards achieved in mathematics to match those achieved in writing. The school has embraced the new curriculum to ensure that pupils make at least good progress in their work. This was a key line of enquiry for this inspection, which found that the school has enhanced its mathematics curriculum. The final area for improvement was ensuring that the most able pupils are involved and challenged in lessons. From

observations of lessons that we undertook together, we found highly engaged pupils who were engrossed in their learning. Although pupils' progress in mathematics books is very good, the school's new approach has not yielded the very high rates of progress evidenced in pupils' writing at the end of key stage 2 in 2016.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

The safeguarding leader is knowledgeable about her role and is highly effective. Staff are continually updated and have a very good awareness of safeguarding procedures. Safeguarding is given a high priority by all staff. The culture within school is one of vigilance.

Pupils feel safe and the vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe in school. Pupils talk about the high level of pastoral care that they receive from their class teachers. Relationships in school are excellent. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Inspection findings

- As part of this inspection, we agreed to look at how effectively key stage 2 pupils are challenged to achieve the highest standards in mathematics. The highly effective mathematics lead has received training to introduce a new scheme which is starting to add clear depth to pupils' learning through problem-solving and reasoning. This has been successful in ensuring that pupils make great strides in their learning. The progress seen in pupils' books is at least good and is notably better in Year 6 because of the highly effective teaching that pupils receive. Pupils engage well in their work. Those who find their work difficult stick at their challenges to solve problems. The most effective learning is supported by effective modelling from teachers, to ensure that pupils are clear about what they are learning. Most pupils like mathematics because it is fun; many agree that it challenges their thinking. However, some of the most able pupils in some year groups felt that they could be stretched to achieve even more. The improvements that leaders have implemented have not yet been fully embedded to ensure that the most able pupils' progress matches the high expectations set by leaders and governors in their pursuit of excellence.
- The second area that we agreed to look at was how effectively leaders promote transitions between key stages to promote pupils' progress and attainment. This is a clear area of strength for the school. Highly effective transitions are in place to enable pupils to make a flying start to their learning in their next class. The school offers new Reception children numerous opportunities to attend school in the lead up to them going into school in September. Children quickly settle because they are 'school-ready' and are familiar with the setting. Relationships within the school are excellent. Year 6 buddies support Reception children so that they are confident. They quickly become part of the school family. There are very strong links with the local high school for Year 6, whose move to secondary education is carefully managed. This is done through a range of meetings between staff and pupils, workshops and visits. The input of former

pupils to this process is clearly appreciated by leaders. The outcome is that pupils feel ready for the exciting journey they will embark upon. In-year transitions are also handled well. Pupils visit their new classes and there is a strong consistency in the environment that ensures that pupils are ready to start work in their new class in familiar surroundings. The staff handover meetings ensure that targets are set for pupils as early as possible to enable the teaching to be matched to pupils' needs. This enables pupils to move to the next stage of their education with confidence.

- Finally, we looked at how effectively the design of the curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of history and geography. Pupils are active participants in the planning of topic work which contains a strong thread of history and geography. Imaginative topics that engage pupils make learning enjoyable and ensure that they take pride in their work. Pupils' workbooks provide a clear sense of chronology and locational knowledge through comparisons between other cultures and different time periods. Their books are a delightful record charting the development of their understanding of history and geography. The new leader of these subjects is passionate and has a clear view of how she would like to develop the subjects in the future. She has been provided with excellent development by shadowing the headteacher to ensure that she is confident in monitoring the coverage of the curriculum. The new leader is excited by the challenge of maintaining the excellent practice within the school and driving pupils' historical and geographical knowledge even further.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to embed the strategies for problem-solving and reasoning to challenge some most-able pupils further to achieve the highest standard in mathematics.
- they maintain and sustain the school's current strong practice in monitoring history and geography to improve these subjects further.

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

Yours sincerely

Steve Bentham
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I met with leaders, governors and spoke to the school improvement partner about safeguarding and aspects of school leadership and management.
- I visited all classes along with the headteacher and spoke to pupils informally during lessons about their work.
- I heard pupils from Year 2, Year 3 and Year 6 read.

- I reviewed safeguarding documentation, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- I discussed a wide range of topics about school provision with pupils, both formally and informally.
- I conducted a scrutiny of key stage 2 pupils' mathematics books and work in history and geography from across the school.
- I met with the lead teacher for geography and history.
- I reviewed documentation which included the monitoring of teaching and learning, middle leaders' reports for subjects, the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan.
- I took into account 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.