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Mr Matthew Britt
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Britt

Short inspection of Harris Primary Academy Chafford Hundred

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 2018 with Jo Coton, 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 2014.

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 certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have worked with staff, governors and pupils to create a 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 providing 'Excellence, Every Child, Every Day'. All staff who responded to the questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. Parents appreciate the work of the school. One parent, speaking for many, said, 'good school and well run: excellent teachers who are willing to listen and help'.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been effectively tackled. You and other senior leaders have evaluated the school accurately and have the capacity to make successful improvements. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above average in key stages 1 and 2 in 2017. Standards continue to improve because you have ensured that teaching and the curriculum are delivered to a consistently high standard. You are swift to support staff in order to improve their teaching.

Early years provision gives children a very good start to their education. Children learn in well-resourced classes and are interested in their learning because they are provided with interesting and stimulating activities that are well matched to their needs. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning. By the end of Reception an above-average proportion of pupils achieve a good level of development.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. Their eagerness to learn and ask questions begins in the early years and continues as they progress through the school. Pupils are polite and courteous and work well together and support each other in their learning tasks. They are proud of their work and eager to talk about their achievements. Pupils' conduct and behaviour around the school helps to maintain a calm and happy environment. Pupils value the rewards they receive for good work and behaviour.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and all staff give the safety and well-being of pupils high priority. You have extremely well-maintained systems in all areas of safeguarding that are understood by staff. Governors review policies and procedures annually and the Harris Federation provides an extra level of scrutiny to ensure that policies and practices meet the latest statutory guidance and are being followed.

Frequent up-to-date training for staff and governors is undertaken. The appropriate pre-employment checks are carried out before adults are allowed to work with pupils. You and your team ensure that pupils' welfare needs are met. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns they have about a pupil's welfare. The support for vulnerable pupils is of a high standard.

Pupils said they feel safe in school and that there are adults who listen to them and support them if required. They understand the difference between bullying and falling out. Pupils said that bullying is rare and is quickly resolved by adults. Pupils said racism is 'ultra-rare' because 'we respect one another'. Pupils have a very good understanding of the dangers of using the internet and social networking. They are taught to keep themselves safe outside of school through road safety activities. Parents and staff agreed that pupils are safe.

Inspection findings

- Our first line of enquiry was to look at whether the curriculum provided adequate opportunities for pupils to study subjects other than mathematics and English in sufficient depth. We found that the highly stimulating learning environment supports a broad and exciting curriculum. Examples of pupils' high-quality work are displayed around the school. The curriculum is very well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits that enhance pupils' knowledge and enjoyment of learning.

- We saw some excellent examples of pupils deepening their subject knowledge and understanding. For example, in Year 1 pupils were planning an experiment to see which conditions are best for growing plants. The pupils I spoke to were able to give detailed predictions on which growing condition would be most favourable and why. Specialist teachers for subjects such as music, art and physical education enable pupils to make strong progress in these subjects.
- Pupils are provided with the opportunity to use their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects. Work in books contained examples of pupils accurately drawing graphs in science and geography and writing for a variety of purposes in other subjects; for example, factual reports and letters. Although there is some teaching of personal, social and health education, it is not always clear how effectively it is being taught. This is because, unlike other subjects, leaders have not mapped out the content in sufficient detail to ensure consistency and frequency of teaching.
- Our next line of enquiry was to look at standards in writing. The progress of pupils in writing is not as strong as that in reading and mathematics. You have identified this as a key priority for the school. Since the previous inspection you have modified the curriculum, introduced a more consistent method of teaching and invested in staff training. This has brought about a high level of consistency in the teaching of writing.
- Teachers have high expectations and pupils are provided with work that is well matched to their needs. For example, the most able children in Reception are able to write at length using punctuation correctly. Pupils' books indicate a clear progression in writing from early years through to Year 6. Work is carefully presented and developments in handwriting are evident. Extended writing in English and other subjects is a strength, showing the application of skills taught. Current pupils are making very strong progress in writing.
- Finally, we looked at the impact of key stage leaders on improving pupils' learning. This was chosen as it was an area for improvement from the previous inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, key stage leaders have received high-quality training that has enabled them successfully to fulfil all aspects of their role. Leaders monitor the progress of pupils and standards within their areas of responsibility. As a result, they rapidly identify any areas of underperformance and address them promptly.
- Strong evaluation of the impact of new strategies and changes to existing practice have been very influential in improving outcomes for pupils. The new system for tracking pupils' progress in subjects other than mathematics and English is ensuring that pupils develop the right skills and knowledge required to succeed in these subjects.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is clarity around the teaching of personal, social and health education.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Pardy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we met with you, your deputy headteachers, key stage leaders and three members of the governing body. We also spoke with the designated lead for safeguarding and one of the deputy leads.

We visited classes with you and the deputy headteacher where we observed pupils learning and talked to them about their work and their school. In lessons, we looked at pupils' work in books to determine the quality of learning over time and the quality of learning across the curriculum.

We met with two groups of pupils and spent time speaking informally with pupils in class and at breaktime. We scrutinised the school's documents about safeguarding, including the record of checks on the suitability of each member of staff to work with pupils, and information relating to attendance and behaviour. I also looked at the school's own evaluation of its performance and your plans for its improvement.

I considered the 67 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 11 free-text comments and the views of 19 staff who completed the staff questionnaire.