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Mr Steven Meakin
Headteacher
Holly Lodge Primary School
Stratford Road
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Dear Mr Meakin

Short inspection of Holly Lodge Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 December 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 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 lead with vision, drive and conviction. You, your senior team and your staff are dedicated to ensuring that all pupils are ambitious and achieve well. Together with the staff, trustees and governors, you have created an exciting and vibrant learning environment. You have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths, as well as what needs to be done to further improve. This is because you succinctly and accurately analyse pupils' achievement. As a result, your evaluation of the school's effectiveness is exceptionally sharp.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school and like learning. This is the result of well-targeted events that help pupils to understand important safety issues well. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. They enjoy learning because 'teachers make learning fun' and 'they [the staff] give up a lot of their time to prepare and check our work'. Pupils' conduct throughout the day is very good. They are thoughtful and sensible as they play and move around the school.

Most parents and carers are positive about the school. The large majority of parents recognise that their children are happy, safe and making good progress. Those who submitted messages via Ofsted's free-text facility and spoke with me commented that 'My children feel cared for, safe and happy.' Another parent remarked: 'My child has come on leaps and bounds.'

Governors and the multi academy trustees have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and priorities, and are highly aspirational for staff and pupils. They speak knowledgeably about the impact of strategies to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes. Governors and trustees are well informed about safeguarding and have ensured that all procedures to safeguard children are secure. For example, they check the single central record carefully.

You have addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection well. Subject leaders share in moving the school forward and are held fully accountable for pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility. Performance management is used effectively. This, combined with a comprehensive training programme for potential leaders, ensures good opportunities to develop leadership skills in staff when they are ready to do so. The leadership team is strong, grown from some teachers that have been at the beginning of their teaching career when they started at the school. They, alongside other staff, have developed into very strong leaders. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of writing in different genres that are of high quality. In the teaching of mathematics, staff provide a wide range of meaningful tasks that are usually demanding so that pupils make rapid progress. However, pupils' mathematical skills need to be strengthened by ensuring that pupils are challenged more consistently, including in problem-solving.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All the necessary checks are completed for the staff at the school to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. Members of staff receive annual training and regular updates to ensure that they understand and can implement the most recent guidance. All staff are vigilant in relation to safeguarding. Designated safeguarding leaders are trained to a high standard. Senior leaders, governors and staff ensure that their own training is effective, up to date and that they are well informed about new developments in relation to the welfare and protection of pupils.

You work well with a wide range of agencies to safeguard children. This is because of close and constructive links with children's social care, school healthcare and the police. All concerns are followed up rigorously, ensuring that pupils and their families receive the right type of help.

Pupils know about the different forms that bullying may take but say that it is not a problem in their school. They feel confident that if it does occur, it will be dealt with immediately and effectively. Pupils say that they know who to speak to if they have any worries. Leaders make sure that safety issues, including e-safety, are addressed thoroughly within the well-planned curriculum.

Inspection findings

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, evident through lesson observations, book scrutiny and discussions with pupils. Pupils use their calculation skills well and in different contexts. For example, pupils found the perimeter and area of a wide range of shapes using their multiplication and addition skills accurately. They are confident in mathematics and enthusiastic about their work. You have developed an effective assessment system that enables staff to identify quickly any pupils who have fallen behind. These accurate assessments also ensure that effective support is usually put in place to enable them to catch up where there are specific gaps in their mathematical knowledge. However, on occasions, the expectation of what pupils can achieve in mathematics is too low. This means that the pace of learning slows, because pupils are completing mathematical tasks and problems that are too easy.
- You and the staff have a rigorous and reflective approach to improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics has improved and the gap between these pupils and their peers has diminished. There are times when disadvantaged pupils outperform their peers in school and nationally. This is illustrated in the quality of pupils' writing in 'learning books' which is above the standard expected for their age. Pupils are taught to use advanced and sophisticated vocabulary well, enabling them to improve their writing quickly, using a lively and engaging style. Leaders have carefully planned the use of the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils. You understand precisely where improvements have been required and what strategies and actions have worked well and why. You check carefully that planned improvements continue to be effective. Governors also have a clear understanding of the school's additional support for disadvantaged pupils and the impact of this work.
- Leaders at all levels are a significant strength of the school. Subject and middle leaders are trained well, knowledgeable about their subjects and form a highly cohesive and effective team. They play a full part in developing and evaluating the school's priorities for improvement, taking a central role in the ongoing improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement. In key stage 1 previously, there have been few pupils who have reached a greater depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching accurately in their respective areas and give helpful advice to colleagues on how they can improve their practice. Consequently, more pupils are reaching the higher standards. Leaders' actions and determination to improve pupils' outcomes have resulted in important and effective developments in the curriculum. As a result, you have provided an extensive range of experiences to promote learning beyond the classroom and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. One parent commented: 'My child is learning in a diverse, happy and creative environment.'
- Leaders are taking effective steps in improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils' attendance is now close to the national average.

- Your team has worked very hard to engage pupils and families and inform them about the importance of coming to school regularly and being on time. Incentives, help and rewards have been used very effectively to encourage pupils to come to school as often as possible. For example, the breakfast club has proved successful in ensuring that pupils who have had low attendance before attend much more regularly. Additionally, pupils are ready to start the school day from the moment the bell rings.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers plan learning in mathematics that challenges all pupils at an appropriate level, so that their outcomes improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, some of your staff, the chief executive officer, two trustees and members of the local governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I met with subject leaders, and other staff with specific responsibilities. I reviewed documentation relating to pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding checks and policies and procedures. I observed pupils around the school and at work in classes. I looked at pupils' books, spoke to pupils about their work and met with a group of pupils. I spoke with parents at the end of the school day to seek their views about the school. I also took into account the 83 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own survey of parents' views from earlier this year, and the free-text messages submitted by parents to Ofsted.