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Principal
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Dear Miss Rasheed

Short inspection of James Elliman Academy

Following my visit to the school on 8 November 2018 with Catherine Davies, 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 January 2015.

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 highly ambitious for the school and have an extremely accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Leaders share your determination and are highly motivated, with a relentless focus to raise pupils' achievement. You all have an unequivocal commitment for pupils to achieve their very best. You recognise that there are still some areas in which the school needs to improve. Improving the progress of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) remains an area for improvement. A larger proportion of most-able pupils need to make greater progress in mathematics.

Parents are highly supportive of the school, one saying: 'My son has blossomed at this school, he has grown in confidence, has made so many friends, he has learned many life skills.'

Governors know the school very well because they visit routinely to undertake a range of tasks, including visiting classrooms, appraising pupils' work with leaders and evaluating safeguarding arrangements. They are very thorough in evaluating the school's strengths and areas for development. The governors hold the principal and leaders effectively to account for pupils' progress. You are supported very well by the multi-academy trust, which provides many opportunities to share best practice with other schools.

The school is very happy place, where the caring and nurturing ethos ensures that everyone is valued. The school motto, 'Aspire and endeavour to achieve our

personal best', resonates throughout the school in pupils' strong behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils play and support each other well and have a very inclusive attitude towards each other. One pupil said, 'It's okay to be different and make your own choices.' The engaging and inspiring displays around the school enhance the learning environment and celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils are supportive of the new system that teachers have introduced to respond to their work, and one pupil said: 'It really helps us to improve.'

You have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Pupils have more opportunities to develop their reading skills across a range of subjects, through having access to high-quality texts. Vibrant reading displays linked to a wide range of authors capture the pupils' imagination and interest in developing their understanding of the various texts being studied in class. Performance management systems are strong to ensure that staff are held to account with well-chosen measurable outcomes.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at James Elliman Academy. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed. There are rigorous systems to monitor and check the well-being of pupils. When any concerns arise, staff take quick and effective action, including when a pupil's attendance is low. The school works effectively with outside agencies to support pupils and their families when required. Pre-employment checks to ensure the suitability of staff are firmly in place. The school's safeguarding leads share best practice with other schools in the academy trust to review and develop the strong practice at James Elliman Academy.

Leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep safe. These include inviting visiting speakers to meet pupils. For example, the NSPCC and a touring theatre company visited to explore a range of safeguarding topics. Pupils feel safe and are well supported by the adults around them. Parents also agree that their children are safe at school. Pupils are aware of the potential dangers when using the internet at school and pupils said that they help their brothers and sisters to be safe when online at home.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on: how effectively leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well; how leaders ensure that pupils with SEND make good progress; and how leaders ensure that pupils from the higher-prior-attainment group make good progress in mathematics.
- The tracking of disadvantaged pupils' progress is sharp and thorough, and additional support for pupils is evaluated effectively. In the lessons we visited, pupils were engaged and working well to meet their targets. Disadvantaged pupils receive a range of useful additional and well-planned adult support. Governors hold leaders effectively to account for the spending of the pupil premium funding and how it benefits pupils. Disadvantaged pupils make good

progress. You rightly acknowledge that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils need to make stronger progress to achieve greater understanding, particularly in mathematics.

- Most pupils with SEND make good progress. Pupils display highly positive attitudes to learning. Leaders ensure that the correct additional support is provided to pupils so that they can catch up with their peers. Teaching assistants provide strong support to pupils, including positive encouragement and praise. During our classroom visits, an adult worked effectively with a group of pupils to develop their social and emotional needs. Leaders undertake regular evaluations of pupils' work and give useful feedback afterwards to staff to improve their teaching further. Leaders recognise that they need to develop a more consistent approach to meeting the needs of all pupils so that more make stronger progress.
- You have clearly identified the need to raise achievement in mathematics for high-attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have wisely evaluated the curriculum and made some adjustments to the teaching of mathematics across the school. Teachers' effective questioning now enables more pupils to develop their higher-order thinking skills to find solutions to mathematical problems. Staff ensure that learning activities are pitched accurately to best meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils now have more opportunities to respond to teachers' feedback on their work from their last mathematics lesson. This helps to clarify any misconceptions before new learning takes place. The pupils' good use of a range of mathematical apparatus supports their learning well. Pupils have strong resilience and determination to improve their understanding, knowledge and skills. Leaders have high expectations of the most able pupils and recognise that there is still more to be done to ensure that more pupils reach higher standards.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- there is greater consistency in the quality of strategies provided to support pupils with SEND to enable a greater proportion to make strong progress
- high expectations are sustained in maths, especially for the higher-attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, so they make strong and sustained progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Darren Aisthorpe
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

We met with you, the vice-principal for safeguarding and inclusion, the vice-principal for key stage 1, the vice-principal for lower key stage 2, the vice-principal for upper key stage 2, the early years leader, the human resources manager, the personal assistant to the principal, three governors and two trustees (of whom one is the chief executive officer of the academy trust). We spoke with 12 parents on the playground and considered 53 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 13 free-text comments.

Together with you and the senior school leaders, we observed teaching and learning across the school. We looked at pupils' learning in their mathematics books, reading books, topic books and writing books, as well as evidence of learning in the classrooms. We observed pupils at breaktime and spoke with them informally. We also considered a range of documentation, including documents related to safeguarding, the school action plan, safeguarding records, the school's self-evaluation, governance and the curriculum.