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Mrs Rebecca Howarth
Headteacher
Stanley Road Primary School
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Dear Mrs Howarth

Short inspection of Stanley Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 September 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained and further improved the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your self-evaluation judges the school accurately to be good. Governors and the local authority advisor confirm that the school has continued to improve under your committed and determined leadership. The school now has many strengths, including pupils' behaviour and welfare and the progress that pupils make from their starting points.

You, your leadership team and governors have developed a welcoming and warm feel to the school, with strong relationships between staff and pupils. There is a real family ethos. Leaders are determined to provide the highest quality education and, through their knowledge of each pupil, recognise when further support is required to help pupils achieve well. The learning environment is purposeful, calm and respectful. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are polite and well-mannered. Parents say that the school is really adept at both the nurturing and academic aspects of education and that staff do everything they can for the children. Others agree, stating the school is 'fantastic'.

Since the last inspection, your leadership team has reviewed assessment procedures and now uses a much more comprehensive system to identify individual pupils' learning needs. Teachers devise learning activities swiftly to meet these identified needs so that no child is allowed to fall behind. Pupils' books show improvements in

the quality of writing and standard of mathematics. There is also an improving trend in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stages 1 and 2. The proportions of pupils attaining greater depth are also increasing.

Governors are sensitive to the needs of the local community and the backgrounds of families and are determined to offer the best education possible. Governors have a better grasp of pupil attainment and progress data to inform their strategic decisions. They have invested heavily in high-quality professional development. They have also used the pupil premium funding to employ additional teachers in the early years classes and Year 6. Both decisions have had a strong impact on improved provision and pupil outcomes.

The school's curriculum (subjects and other experiences) meets national requirements and pupils' needs through the careful development of pupils' language skills and their understanding of the local community and wider world.

You and your team have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement in the last inspection report of 2013. You were asked to provide more opportunities to explain new words to enable pupils to understand their work. Displays of words and 'vocabulary dozens' (where important words connected to topics are shared with pupils) have given pupils the understanding to help them make good progress in subjects across the curriculum.

You were also asked to ensure that the most able pupils were given work which was appropriately challenging. The school's recent results in national tests show a rise in the numbers of pupils reaching the more challenging standards. My observations also showed how well teachers intervene to provide harder work for those pupils who have already grasped the aspects being taught.

Your determination to ensure that rights are respected in school has created an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. They value their rights but acknowledge that they have responsibilities too. Pupils recognise how leaders use rights and responsibilities to solve potentially difficult conflicts. As a result, pupils accept and engage with fundamental British values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very well developed.

Your special educational needs coordinator has a very good understanding of the needs of individual pupils. Highly qualified teaching assistants and staff work well with pupils to meet these needs through high quality teaching activities. Support is based on comprehensive child profiles which document support, progress and identified needs. Good links have been made with external agencies, such as speech and language therapists, helping pupils to improve their communication skills.

Pupils stated that they enjoy lessons; they appreciate the element of fun that teachers provide. Parents and pupils value the range and variety of extra-curricular

activities, including trips and various sports clubs. Older pupils feel well prepared for future learning at high school, a typical comment being that the school 'gives you all the knowledge you need'.

You have used the school's lead practitioners to develop a higher quality of teaching across the school. Inspection evidence shows that this is beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievements. However, there is still variability in the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' mathematics and written work across key stage 1 and lower key stage 2.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Safeguarding procedures are fit for purpose. Leaders and governors fulfil statutory requirements when appointing new members of staff.

Parents and pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. Leaders, including governors, ensure that staff receive high-quality training. As a result, staff know how to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse. Staff are very clear about the school's procedures for reporting and recording any concerns they have regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Leaders are tenacious in their work to protect vulnerable pupils.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have introduced and implemented clear programmes to teach pupils about personal and internet safety. Pupils understand the dangers associated with internet use and report concerns to staff.

Attendance rates of all pupils and groups of pupils are currently in line with, or improving towards, national averages. Leaders have implemented very good procedures to tackle absenteeism. There are usually personal, family or health reasons for the lower attendance of some pupils. Leaders support these pupils to reduce absences.

Inspection findings

- Typically, pupils make very good progress in your school because of the high quality of teaching. You introduced the revised national curriculum skilfully, so that teachers fully understood the rise in expectations. You also worked with staff to develop a consistent understanding of the increased standards expected in each year group in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers are now expecting this higher standard of work. Consequently, attainment and progress over the past few years have improved considerably. However, last year's writing results at key stage 2 showed a dip from the previous year.
- My first line of enquiry, therefore, concerned finding out what you have done to improve writing. You have successfully improved the quality of pupils' writing by improving the quality of teaching and making sure that teachers raise their

expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, training has focused on ways that teachers can help pupils to draft and edit their own writing and use grammar accurately. Pupils now produce writing which contains more detail and creates the appropriate atmosphere or tone.

- You are pleased with the improvements made to pupils' writing and provided me with examples to show how pupils are using sentence structures much more consistently. Pupils have a better vocabulary and use repetition well to create imagery and atmosphere. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' writing shows good progress over time. Sentences are better structured and the creative placing of words and phrases is effective. One pupil's writing contained the descriptive phrase 'shadows lingered in the garden – sinister, lurking', which was typical of the quality achieved by the class.
- My second line of enquiry was to find out more about the progress and attainment of pupils in key stage 1. Pupils make good progress in reading because teachers provide a varied teaching programme which includes individual support, opportunities to read during the day and guided reading sessions. Pupils revel in the challenge provided through high-quality teaching which meets their assessed learning needs.
- In mathematics lessons, teachers plan work which is well focused on pupils' identified needs. Teachers share vocabulary with pupils at the beginning of lessons to ensure that difficulties with language do not impede their mathematical understanding. Teachers' high-quality explanations enable pupils to understand new ideas and answer questions confidently in their books. Teachers step in quickly to address misconceptions, enabling pupils to make very good progress. Consequently, pupils in key stage 1 attain high standards.
- Pupils' books show that their writing develops well over time. Teachers' clear and focused emphasis on tenses and verb agreement means that pupils now write accurately in detail and at increasing length. Newly introduced strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing further are already having a good effect. Key to this are the displays of high-quality sentences and words written by pupils.
- For my third line of enquiry I looked at how well teachers meet the needs of children in the Reception class. Children enter the early years foundation stage with standards that are below age-related expectations. Speech and language development are the main barriers to learning.
- Leaders and governors have identified language development of the youngest children as central to the improvement in school standards, so they have employed an additional teacher to work with small groups and provide early individual support and challenge for children.
- Continuous provision (activities set up for children to visit throughout the teaching session) is planned according to children's interests and is adapted to the needs and ages of the children. Staff use praise well to motivate and enthuse children about learning. This works particularly well with the boys across both Nursery and Reception age groups.

- The teaching of phonics and the development of vocabulary in early years is very effective because it is well matched to the assessed needs of pupils. When I visited early years, children were engaged in language work and enjoyed sharing words to describe the taste of different fruits with the teacher. A good balance of activities in continuous provision allows children to practise and develop their understanding of phonics and words.
- Assessments for 2017 show that more children achieved a good level of development within the early years profile than in the previous year. Leaders' assessments and work in children's books show that more children are making increased levels of progress. Leaders recognise that they need to ensure that the difference between school and national results continues to diminish.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that they raise the quality of teaching to that of the best teaching across the school so that:

- proportions of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception class continue to rise towards national averages
- proportions of pupils meeting and exceeding expectations in key stage 1 and key stage 2 continue to rise.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Shackleton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leadership team, parents and three members of the governing body. I also spoke to an advisor supporting the school. In addition, I talked with small groups of pupils around the school, in lessons and formally.

I observed teaching and learning in various classes jointly with the headteacher and scrutinised the writing of pupils across the school. In addition, I listened to pupils read.

I examined and discussed a range of documents, including those relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. I looked at the school's self-evaluation of

how well it is doing, the school's improvement priorities and its assessment information. I reviewed the school's website.

I considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings and the 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View) as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. I also considered the 31 responses to the staff survey.