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Mr Philip Barlow
Chantlers Primary School
Foulds Avenue
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Dear Mr Barlow

Short inspection of Chantlers Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 January 2016 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 November 2010.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You, senior leaders and governors have the highest ambitions for the pupils of the school. You have successfully created a culture, described by governors as 'can do, will do', that ensures everyone is pulling together towards the same aspirational goals. A real sense of teamwork lies at the heart of the school. Staff work closely to support each other and consequently morale is high.

Pupils are extremely complimentary in their articulate praise of the school. They delight in the opportunities that they are given to extend their learning through the challenging work that their teachers plan for them. Classrooms are a hive of activity. High expectations permeate every nook and cranny of the school, ensuring that pupils know what is expected of them. Adults are excellent role models, helping to ensure that an ethos of respect and tolerance reverberates throughout the school.

The areas identified in need of improvement at the previous Ofsted inspection have been successfully tackled. Teachers now use assessment information effectively to plan interesting lessons that build upon pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Those pupils that I spoke to during my visit overwhelmingly report that they enjoy their lessons and relish the challenge of the tasks they are set. This was particularly evident in the mathematics lessons that I observed where pupils were given a choice of challenging activities to undertake.

The use of monitoring and evaluation activities by leaders, also identified as an area in need of improvement at the previous inspection, has been overhauled. Leaders at all levels are now involved in undertaking a range of purposeful activities to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a result, you and governors know the school exceptionally well. All aspects of the school's work come under scrutiny and you use the information gleaned to drive continuous improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning. Those teachers that I spoke to, as well as governors, state that changes in the school have been positive since your appointment in September 2013.

Safeguarding is effective.

In a recent pupil questionnaire, 100% of pupils said that they feel safe at school. Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is very much everyone's business and is given the highest prominence. Staff at the school have received relevant training to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs that a child may be at risk. Clear policies and procedures are also in place so that everyone understands what to do if they have concerns.

The role of the pastoral mentor is held in high regard by the pupils of the school. They trust her to help them deal with any issues that they may be facing in a sensitive and compassionate manner. She works closely with a range of external agencies, including social care, to ensure that appropriate action is taken to keep pupils safe.

Inspection findings

- The headteacher and governors are resolute in their determination to drive continuous improvement across all areas of the school. An investment in a wide range of high-quality professional development for teaching staff has underpinned improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders hold teachers to account for the progress that pupils make. Lesson observations, checks on pupils' books and detailed analysis of assessment information are used to ensure that the quality of teaching does not falter. Teachers interviewed during my visit say that they value this level of scrutiny as they are very well supported to improve any identified gaps in their skills.
- The relatively newly formed senior leadership team and middle leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school inside out. Their plans for improvement are sharply focused and serve as a useful tool to ensure that everyone understands the direction of travel. No one is in doubt of their role and what is expected of them.
- Leaders have demonstrated a strong capacity to deliver further improvements. Their robust actions, for instance, to address recent shortcomings in the standards that pupils reached by the end of Key Stage 1 had an immediate

impact. Consequently, pupils' attainment in 2015 improved significantly so that they reached standards that were in line with those seen nationally.

- Evidence seen during my inspection shows that senior leaders have made significant and substantial changes to the early years provision. Leaders rightly identified that the standards children were reaching when they left the Reception class were not good enough, meaning they were ill-prepared for the rigours of Year 1. Changes in leadership and a relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching resulted in children reaching standards above those seen nationally in 2015. Nonetheless, the school is aware that further work needs to be done to ensure that activities give children greater opportunities to explore and learn about number.
- Governors give of their time generously, visiting school often to find out for themselves the impact of leaders' actions. They receive detailed reports from the headteacher and ask subject leaders to provide termly updates, ensuring that they have their 'fingers on the pulse' of the school. They use all of the evidence they receive to hold leaders to account.
- The teaching of reading is a significant strength of the school. Pupils have left Year 6 reaching standards significantly above the national average for the past three years. A love of reading is promoted well. Three imaginative reading areas, such as a brightly decorated camper van, have been created to ignite pupils' curiosity in books. Furthermore, 40 handheld reading devices have recently been purchased to enrich this aspect of the curriculum further.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that pupils' learning goes beyond the superficial. For instance, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils understood and could explain the mathematical idea behind their written calculation methods because of clear explanations by their teacher.
- Work to find a new approach to challenging the most-able pupils in mathematics is paying dividends. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, I observed some exceptional learning taking place as a small group of pupils taught another group how to order complex calculations. However, a new approach to provide pupils with different challenges in mathematics is still evolving. Currently, those pupils who are less able or lack confidence do not get enough opportunity to deepen their mathematical understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is creditable. They listen to their teachers attentively in lessons and play sensibly and calmly on the playground. Pupils are polite and display good manners, for instance by thanking monitors for holding the door open. Pupils display a very good understanding of British values. In an assembly I observed, pupils were able to maturely explain what democracy meant. Pupils enjoyed deepening their understanding of respect and tolerance through the imaginative acting of a 'grumpy' teacher.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements. One pupil, for instance, spoke with passion and pride about the presentation of her school tie because she was 'high school ready'.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- children in the Reception class are provided with a greater range of activities to develop their mathematical skills
- those pupils who are less able or lacking in confidence are given more frequent opportunities to deepen their mathematical understanding.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bury. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Bell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, a group of 21 pupils, two members of the governing body, a small group of teachers, the pastoral mentor and the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding records. Documents were scrutinised, including: the school development plan, safeguarding checks, minutes of meetings and records of checks on the quality of teaching. I also visited a number of classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher to speak to pupils, look at their books and observe their learning. I also took account of the 44 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as responses to the school's own recent parent and pupil questionnaire.