

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Jenny Carter  
Headteacher  
Fazakerley Primary School  
Formosa Drive  
Liverpool  
Merseyside  
L10 7LD

Dear Mrs Carter

### **Short inspection of Fazakerley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 10 February 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 May 2011.

#### **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 leave no stone unturned in your desire to drive continuous improvements across the school. As a result, the standards pupils reach by the time they leave Year 6 have improved every year since the previous inspection in 2011. In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average, significantly so in mathematics and reading.

Pupils are the jewel in the crown of the school. Their behaviour during lessons is exemplary. They demonstrate their craving for learning by listening attentively to their teachers and working with maturity during independent activities. Pupils are polite and get along very well with one another. As one pupil explained to me, 'the best thing about school is our friends; everyone gets along and looks after each other'.

The actions taken to tackle the areas identified in need of improvement at the previous Ofsted inspection have mostly been successful. The standards that pupils reach, by the time they leave Key Stage 2, in reading and writing have improved significantly since 2011 and are now above those seen nationally. Although standards in English at Key Stage 1 are below the national average, they are also improving.

Pupils' understanding of the wider world, also identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection, is developed effectively through a range of topics that consider subjects such as renewable and non-renewable sources of energy, sustainable global tourism and the study of other parts of the world such as California, Catalonia and Argentina.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Keeping pupils safe is a priority at the school. You, senior leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Procedures to raise and follow up safeguarding concerns, including with outside agencies such as educational welfare or social workers, are well established and understood by all. Records of the actions that the school has taken to keep pupils safe are generally detailed and of a high quality. However, during my inspection I identified a small number of administrative omissions, such as the recording of some discussions that had taken place over the phone to seek advice from other agencies.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are able to explain why it is important not to share personal details when online and are aware of what to do if they experience cyber bullying. Visitors to school, such as the NSPCC, help to further promote pupils' understanding of how to keep safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- You, senior leaders and the governors are determined to continue to drive further improvements across the school. Everyone is ambitious for the pupils of the school and is pulling in the same direction.
- The work of the early years leader has been successful in increasing the proportion of children reaching a good level of development for the past two years. Nonetheless, this remains below that seen nationally.
- Assessment of what children know when they enter the early years is now being used to good effect to shape the curriculum and so ensure that what is being taught matches their needs. As a result, evidence seen during the inspection shows that improvements in standards are set to continue to rise in 2016.
- In the Nursery class, every opportunity is taken to develop children's learning and skills. During the reading of *A Journey through the Jungle*, for example, the class teacher skilfully developed speech and language skills by asking a range of questions about the book.
- In Reception, strong relationships between adults and children underpin learning. Children are keen to learn and respond well to their teachers' instructions and questions. However, learning slows for some children when assessment during lessons fails to pinpoint errors in their work, meaning that misconceptions in their understanding are not tackled quickly.
- Strong leadership has ensured that the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved. The progress pupils are making is tracked

carefully so that any gaps are quickly identified and support is put in place. Teachers have been supported in the delivery of phonics sessions by the leader for this aspect of the curriculum, and demonstration lessons have helped to further support professional development. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2015 rose significantly.

- You have correctly highlighted the need for further improvements in the standards that pupils reach by the time they leave Year 2. The leader for Key Stage 1 has overhauled the way reading is taught. Guided reading sessions are now purposeful and activities meet the needs of the pupils. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils' learning about imperative verbs and instructions moved forward rapidly as they undertook a range of well-planned activities. New reading books to grab pupils' interest have recently been purchased. A new Key Stage 1 library is also in the process of being developed, to further promote a love of reading. To support reading at home, you have held parent reading workshops, and new home reading books have been purchased.
- Pupils' books show that leaders' actions taken to improve writing are also paying dividends. Handwriting skills are now taught explicitly across the school. Success is celebrated and pupils are proud to receive 'handwriting champion' awards in assembly. As a result, presentation in most pupils' books is now strong.
- As a result of a newly designed curriculum, opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills, across a range of subjects, are now being fully exploited. In Year 2, for instance, pupils applied a range of basic spelling and punctuation skills to good effect when writing about 'The Monument' in London.
- In mathematics, pupils develop their calculation skills effectively. Their books show that they are making good progress in accurately solving problems through using a range of formal and non-formal written methods. However, in Key Stage 1, an over-reliance on worksheets means that occasionally space to write down calculations and explore different aspects of number is restricted.
- Marking and feedback to pupils follows the school policy and is consistently applied across the school. As you state, 'it is the driving force behind pupils' progress'. Pupils take care to read and act upon their feedback and, as a result, improve the quality of their work.
- The school works tirelessly to improve the attendance of pupils. Attendance is monitored closely and, where issues are identified, support is put in place to help parents to get their children to school regularly. As a result, attendance has improved every year since 2013. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has more than halved during the same period. Nonetheless, this remains an area of focus for the school as overall attendance is currently below the national average.
- Governors are regular visitors to school. They use the detailed information that they receive to hold leaders fully to account for the impact of their actions. They are proactive in improving their effectiveness further, for

example by recently recruiting a new governor from the local secondary school to contribute to further improving areas such as safeguarding, attendance and transition.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all actions taken by the school to keep pupils safe are always recorded on the appropriate forms
- support and training are provided so that teachers in the early years take every opportunity to accelerate learning through the use of assessment during lessons
- attendance continues to improve so that it is at least in line with that seen nationally
- the use of worksheets does not restrict pupils' learning in some classes in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Liverpool City Council. 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 and other senior leaders, a group of 13 pupils, four members of the governing body, the local authority representative 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 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).