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Mrs Kathryn Honey
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Honey

Short inspection of Blueberry Park

Following my visit to the school on 12 October 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 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As soon as you walk into Blueberry Park School, you enter an environment that is bright, clean and colourful. This is a school where the walls invite and encourage pupils to learn. The energy and enthusiasm of the teachers and staff are obvious and there is no doubt that it is the pupils who matter most. This is the result of the example that you and other leaders set.

Since the last inspection, you have tackled the improvements identified with resolve and success. Reading resources, not just for the early years but for the whole school, are of high quality. Pupils are encouraged and expected to read often and widely. The books available to them are appealing and appropriate to their age and ability. The significant funding spent on these books and the reading areas you have created are proof of how seriously you took the recommendations. It is no surprise that, as a result of this investment, pupils' achievement in reading is better than it was previously.

Likewise, the action you have taken to improve pupils' writing has paid off. The progress that pupils make in their writing during key stage 2 is very rapid. You know that boys' writing skills are not yet strong enough and you are tackling this already, especially in the early years. Importantly, while improving boys' writing skills you have not allowed the standard of writing for girls to slip. This remains high and continues to increase.

Leaders have worked relentlessly to improve pupils' attendance. A group of pupils is persistently absent. You have worked very hard with the parents and carers of these pupils and involved other agencies. The improvements in attendance are modest but you are right in showing no let-up and continuing to try new ways of engaging with these parents.

The pastoral support that is provided for pupils at this school is worthy of mention. A significant amount of time, energy and resources is spent on ensuring that any barriers getting in the way of pupils' learning are minimised. The fact that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well demonstrates this.

The leadership team has changed significantly since the last inspection. The team has a get-up-and-go approach to school improvement. In particular, the leaders in charge of phonics and mathematics are already having a positive impact on pupils' learning. They accurately identified what needed to improve and all the staff have shown eagerness and commitment to make the necessary changes. As we discussed, teachers are not developing pupils' phonic skills further across the curriculum and beyond Year 1. Analysis of the school's mathematics results in 2016 indicated that pupils struggled when having to solve problems. Leaders intelligently reviewed the planning of mathematics and evaluated that problem-solving opportunities were not covered in sufficient depth or had insufficient resources.

Although not identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection, the improvements in early years are noticeable. The standards that children achieve have greatly improved and the quality of outdoor resources effectively promotes children's learning through play. Since the last inspection you have opened the nursery to two-year-old children. This is allowing you to help children reach higher starting points when they enter school in the Reception Year. The nursery is a happy, homely and welcome addition to the school community.

None of this would be possible without the support and vision of the governing body. Governors know the school well because they are always asking relevant questions. Leaders and governors complement each other. The challenge that governors provide is objective and fair. They are determined to see the school improve further and have the confidence in you and the staff team to ensure that this happens.

Safeguarding is effective.

The policies and practices that you have in place maintain a culture of diligence and vigilance in keeping children safe.

The safety of children runs through your school like a golden thread. Curriculum planning incorporates key messages for pupils on how to keep safe. You have established a culture where safeguarding is everyone's first priority. Recently, the whole school community has been considering what it means to be gay, lesbian,

bisexual or transgender. You have also worked closely on a number of programmes with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The pupils I spoke with all said that they feel very safe at this school and that there is always a trusted adult whom they can talk to if they ever had any worries or concerns. You and other leaders provide regular training and updates for all staff which reflect the most recent safeguarding developments. It is commendable that, after each training session, you evaluate staff's understanding of what has been delivered.

Inspection findings

- All of the safeguarding and welfare requirements that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare are being met.
- The communication with parents is very strong in the early years but the role that parents play in their children's learning lessens as they move through school. You agreed that it is important to involve parents in their child's learning as they get older and you are focusing on improving this aspect of your provision.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. These pupils receive individually targeted support and achieve well.
- The pupil premium funding is spent wisely and its effectiveness is evaluated frequently. The school's disadvantaged pupils achieve well and the differences between the achievement of these pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing more and more. The most able disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well.
- Your analysis shows that the quality of teaching continues to improve and that teaching throughout the school is good or better. Information about pupils' attainment and progress for pupils supports your view. Other adults in the classroom are used purposefully.
- Attendance has improved but continues to be below the national average.
- The proportion of children in the early years who are achieving age-related expectations continues to increase and is now above the national average. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development for their age in 2016 was well above the national average and showed significant improvement on previous years. This is a consequence of the new initiatives brought in by the early years leader and the introduction of a personalised approach to learning, to ensure that every child is challenged. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well in the early years.
- Standards in the phonics check in Year 1 have shown improvements since the last inspection and are closer to the national average. The difference between the standards reached by boys and girls is reducing. Disadvantaged pupils achieve consistently better than other pupils nationally. Pupils' phonics skills, however, are not developed or promoted strongly enough across the curriculum.
- Standards reached at the end of key stage 2 have been consistently above national averages since the last inspection. In 2016, pupils made excellent progress in their reading and writing. This was not the case for

mathematics. Your own scrutiny showed that opportunities and resources for problem-solving in mathematics did not give pupils the skills that they needed to achieve in this area of the subject.

- The behaviour of pupils is good and the quality of relationships that the pupils have with each other, their teachers and other adults is a strength of your school. When incidents do occur, the quality of recording and following up actions is of a very high quality. Pupils are confident that any bullying is dealt with quickly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers promote and support pupils' phonics skills across the curriculum and in all year groups
- the teaching of mathematics includes the necessary resources and opportunities to develop pupils' problem-solving skills
- you encourage and support parents to be involved in their children's learning as they move through the school, just as they are in the early years.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection I had meetings with you, other senior leaders and two members of the governing body. I was also able to speak to a representative of the local authority. With you and two other senior leaders, I visited all classes and had the opportunity to speak with pupils and see their work. I checked that all the welfare requirements were being met in the nursery provision. I also held focused meetings with the early years leader and the leader in charge of mathematics. I met with a group of pupils during the day. I spoke with a number of parents at the school gates and took account of six free-text comments. There were too few responses to 'Parent View', the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, to generate a report. There were no responses to the online staff questionnaire or to the pupil questionnaire. I took into account the recent parental and pupil surveys that you have recently undertaken. I scrutinised assessment information, school improvement plans, behaviour and attendance logs, a number of case studies, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.

I considered in detail a number of questions:

- How well is the provision in the early years preparing children for developing phonics and reading skills in key stage 1?
- How effectively have leaders ensured that the new mathematics curriculum has been implemented and that schemes of work and teachers' planning reflect the new changes and developments?
- How well have leaders ensured that pupils' attendance at school is at least in line with the national average?
- How effective are policies and practices in ensuring a positive safeguarding culture?