

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
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Mrs Tina Facer  
Headteacher  
Park Street Primary School  
Branch Road  
Park Street  
St Albans  
AL2 2LX

Dear Mrs Facer

### **Short inspection of Park Street Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 13 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 November 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 have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by having high standards and refusing to accept any teaching that is less than good. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Provisional results for key stage 2 in 2016 reflect the high levels of achievement which were seen in pupils' books during this inspection.

The improvements in pupils' achievement are a clear sign that you have dealt successfully with the areas that were identified as relative weaknesses at the previous inspection. Effective improvement planning has led to the development of a broad and balanced curriculum. Some high-quality work was seen in geography, history and science books. The school has also developed links with schools in Japan and Uganda, and has attained the International Schools Award. This work has helped pupils to develop a good understanding of the wider world and the different cultures and religions which exist within it.

Parents are generally supportive of the school. However, some parents are unhappy with the way in which the school follows up incidents of poor behaviour. I looked at this issue carefully during the inspection, speaking to pupils, considering the views of staff and governors and talking to parents at the start of the school day. I also observed behaviour during lessons, in the dining room and in the playground.

Pupils' conduct and their attitudes to learning were exemplary. However, the school's records show there are occasional incidents, involving a small number of pupils who sometimes find it difficult to conform to the school's expectations. Although these incidents are usually resolved quickly, and staff ensure that pupils are safe and happy, school leaders do not always inform parents about what has happened and what action has been taken. This was reflected in some of the comments fed back through Parent View. For example, one parent stated: 'The school does not feed any issues relating to bad behaviour back to the offender's parents well.'

Governors have a range of appropriate experience and expertise. They play an active role in school life and ask probing questions of school leaders, which helps to ensure that they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Governors are well known to parents and pupils. They keep parents informed about matters that affect the school and often seek the views of parents and pupils. For example, the chair of governors recently wrote to parents about the negative comments that had been registered on Parent View regarding pupils' behaviour. Governors also made a number of visits to the school to see for themselves how well pupils behaved. They were able to report a positive picture back to parents.

There have been many changes at the school over the past two years and these have been managed well, with high standards being maintained. Further changes are imminent as you have recently decided to retire at the end of this term. Governors are currently working with the local authority and the diocese to recruit your replacement.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The safeguarding of children is clearly the top priority at Park Street Primary School. Children are taught how to stay safe both in the community and when using the internet or social media. Staff are encouraged to be vigilant and raise and record any concerns that they might have about a pupil. Issues are followed up promptly and thoroughly with the involvement of external agencies where appropriate. Staff are trained in safeguarding matters, at levels appropriate to their responsibilities, and are up to date with issues that pose different risks to children. School leaders ensure that rigorous checks are made on all adults who apply to work at the school. The school's central record for recording these checks is well maintained and audited regularly. Governors know their duties and are vigilant in the checks that they make of the school's work in this area.

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils achieve well at Park Street. They make good progress across the school. In 2016, almost all of the Year 6 cohort of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Around a quarter of the cohort reached a high standard in mathematics and 40% in reading. A similar percentage was judged to be working at greater depth in writing. This reflects the good provision that is in place to meet the needs of the most able children at the school.

- Very good links are made with parents before children start at the school and this helps to ensure that children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. The learning areas are stimulating, both indoors and outdoors, and children have fun investigating and exploring the many exciting activities that are provided for them. Children enjoy school and quickly develop confidence and good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at breaktimes. They have excellent attitudes to learning, and the relationship between pupils and the adults who teach them is a real strength of the school. Pupils look after their school and wear their uniforms with pride. Older pupils enjoy the additional responsibilities that they are given, for example representing their classmates on the School Forum or acting as play leaders during the lunch break.
- Over the past year there has been a focus on the progress that the small number of disadvantaged pupils make, as their attainment has been well below that of other pupils nationally over the past two years. There are signs that the additional support that is being provided is making an impact with pupils currently at the school. However, the attendance of this group of pupils is well below that of other pupils. This is preventing further progress and school leaders recognise the need to address this issue. School leaders have also failed to provide information on the school's website about how well disadvantaged pupils are achieving, and the barriers that are preventing them from making better progress.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides opportunities for pupils to study a wide range of subjects, including science, music and humanities. Pupils showed great enthusiasm for learning in a Spanish lesson that was visited during this inspection, singing songs and enjoying the challenge of responding to mathematics questions in Spanish. Some high-quality work was also seen in geography, history and science books. However, this was not consistent across the school and, in some year groups, there was a noticeable difference in the quality of work in English and mathematics books and that seen in the wider curriculum, where some teachers have lower expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving.
- There is a strong music tradition at Park Street. More than 50 pupils regularly sing in the school choir, with regular performances in the local community. More than 70 pupils receive individual or small group tuition in a range of instruments, including guitar, piano, clarinet and flute.
- Governance is effective. The governing body is well led, well organised, effective and ambitious. Governors regularly check that the information that they receive from school leaders is accurate through their contact visits to the school. They seek the views of pupils. For example, during the summer term, they met with pupils to gain an understanding of how the School Forum is organised, and how pupils gather the views of their peers.
- Parents who met with the inspector, and many who responded to Parent View, were extremely positive about the school. A typical response was: 'Park Street is a warm, friendly and safe environment and both our children enjoy going to school and are very happy.'

- The school receives regular support from the local authority, which it values highly. School staff also benefit from the training and support networks that the local authority provides.

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

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- systems for recording and following up incidents of poor behaviour are improved and result in better communication with parents
- all teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in the wider curriculum
- the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils continue to improve so that the gap between them and other pupils nationally diminishes
- the school's website meets all legal requirements.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the deputy headteacher, the two assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator. I met with three governors (including the chair of the governing body). I also spoke to a representative of the local authority. I scrutinised a range of documents, policies and assessment information. I made short visits to all classrooms with you to observe teaching and learning and looked at work in pupils' books. I observed behaviour in lessons and in the playground, during breaktimes. I spoke to some parents before school and also considered responses from parents and staff to Ofsted questionnaires. I focused particularly on the following areas:

- the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and the impact of pupil premium funding on these pupils' achievement
- the progress made by pupils in key stage 2 and boys' performance in writing
- the wider school curriculum and how the curriculum develops pupils' cultural awareness.