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Mrs Tracy Beaty  
Headteacher  
Beech Street Community Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Beaty

### **Short inspection of Beech Street Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 31 January 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 October 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Under your leadership the school has gone from strength to strength. Through your passion, and that of the deputy headteacher, you have created an environment in which pupils feel safe and thrive, both academically and in their personal development. Your commitment to pupils and their families shines through and, along with all your staff, you have created a culture of care and nurture for the whole school community.

Most parents who spoke to me or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are very positive about the school and would recommend it to others. A number of parents particularly appreciate that you and your staff make time to listen to their child and say that their child 'loves school'. It is clear from my short time with you that this is a caring and happy school.

The very large majority of staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Beech Street. They say that the school is well led and they feel well supported. Staff share your vision and aspirations and there is a strong sense of them working together to drive the school's continued improvement.

Your school welcomes a high number of pupils who are placed with you as part of the local authority's 'fair access' protocol. Some also join you as international new arrivals. Although some settle near to the school, a number move on to other areas

of the country; consequently a very high number of pupils move in and out of school. These pupils, many of whom have vulnerabilities, have a significant impact on the school's outcomes. Nevertheless, you meet pupils' needs extremely well by overcoming barriers to learning and ensuring that pupils feel safe and secure. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points.

In 2016, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception and the percentage of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check were comparable to national averages. At the end of key stage 1, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in these subjects, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth was just below that of pupils of a similar age nationally. You have analysed pupils' performance thoroughly and have put actions in place to ensure that more pupils are on track to achieve at greater depth in 2017.

At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils achieved above those of a similar age at the expected standard in writing and comparably in mathematics. However, you are well aware that pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, achieved less well in reading. Also the proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling were below national averages. You are very aware that these proportions need to improve. The actions you have put in place are already leading to improvement in these areas and more pupils are now on track to achieve at expected standards and also at higher standards.

Attendance is a high priority for the school and is slowly improving, but is still below the national average. You have effective systems for monitoring attendance and you use them well to make inroads into your high number of persistent absentees. You have taken positive action to improve attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are regularly absent. The work of your full-time children and families officer and the emphasis you and your staff place on the importance of attending school is beginning to have a beneficial impact, with some notable successes. Where families are struggling, you are very supportive and exercise appropriate sensitivity on an individual family basis. Despite this work, I agree with you that there are still too many pupils who are late for school and this needs to be addressed.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to improve the quality of teaching, particularly of writing, by sharing best practice within school more widely. You were asked to improve leadership and management by requiring leaders to check teaching more regularly, to ensure its impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Inspectors also asked leaders to sharpen their focus in school development planning so that evaluations more accurately reflected the impact of actions and pupils' outcomes. Finally, leaders were asked to provide governors with regular information on the progress of pupils and for governors to develop their skills and knowledge to enable them to ask the right questions and hold school leaders to account.

Leaders have addressed all of these aspects effectively and have ensured that the following improvements have taken place:

- There has been substantial change in teaching staff since the last inspection. Leaders have focused effectively on developing the quality of teaching and as a result pupils are benefiting from a consistent approach which encourages high expectations. Writing has a high profile in school; the quality of resources offered to pupils to stimulate them in writing tasks is good, as is the way the skills are taught to develop writing. As a result, pupils' outcomes in writing are improving.
- There are rigorous and regular checks on the quality of teaching. These form part of a cycle of activities that includes looking at work in pupils' books and regularly checking on the progress pupils are making. Leaders use this information effectively to ensure that pupils' needs are met and that teaching continues to improve.
- Leaders' school self-evaluation and school development plans are accurate, reflective and capture the strengths of the school and areas in need of further work. They are used effectively to ensure that everyone in school is clear about the direction in which they are heading.
- The quality of information provided to governors, including on progress, is of a high standard. Governance is now a strength; governors have been very conscientious in the development of their skills and knowledge, offer a range of valuable expertise to the school and are confident to ask appropriately challenging questions.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your team have ensured that pupils have a safe and secure environment by promoting the clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding records are kept meticulously and are reviewed regularly to ensure they meet statutory requirements. Regular and appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism and female genital mutilation. Your vigilance around the care and support of vulnerable pupils is of the highest standard. This, in part, is due to the trust that parents have in you and your staff to always prioritise the safety of their child. Leaders have exceptionally effective relationships with other agencies and are instrumental in contributing to the safeguarding of the vulnerable pupils in your care.

Pupils say they feel very safe and well cared for in school. As a result, pupils feel very confident that adults will help them if needed. Pupils of all ages talk with knowledge about the ways they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and when online. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that you and the staff keep their children safe and that they are well looked after.

## Inspection findings

- You and your deputy are building a strong, wider leadership team. Your collaborative approach results in staff feeling that they are an important part of the improvement journey. You and your leadership team have a very good capacity for improving the school further.
- The information you gather about pupils' progress is appropriate. You have a clear system that is used effectively by leaders, teachers and governors. This information clearly identifies which pupils or groups are making progress and which need some additional support or challenge. You have refined your information gathering on pupils who are middle attaining at the start of key stage 2. This increased focus has ensured that more pupils are on track to achieve higher standards by the end of key stage 2.
- You have correctly identified the need to improve the achievement of pupils in reading across the school and also to further increase the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth or higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. You have taken decisive action, including refining your reading curriculum, increasing the opportunities pupils have to read and complete comprehension exercises across the curriculum, introducing higher-level vocabulary to pupils and introducing the use of reading journals. These actions are already having a positive impact. I agree with you that there is still more to do.
- Children start in the early years with skills and knowledge that are below those of similar-aged pupils. There is a good quality of provision and teaching in Nursery and Reception. As a result, children make good progress and are well equipped to start in Year 1. A wide range of stimulating learning experiences is available to children both inside and outside and children enjoy engaging in them. You made a bold decision to temporarily alter provision for the present Reception cohort group, who have a diverse range of learning needs. This decision has been successful and has benefited these children enormously as they are now happy and keen to learn.
- There are many strengths within the school. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Pupils say how much they enjoy school and report that they like work 'that gets their brain working'. Personal development is central to your work and pupils are excellent ambassadors for care and consideration to others. They are welcoming and talk of how they 'treat each other kindly'. The emphasis the school places on developing skills which enable children to talk about their feelings and emotions and to listen sensitively to others is invaluable in supporting all pupils. This is particularly the case for those with vulnerabilities, so that they can build confident and affirming life skills.
- A key strength of the school is your relationship with parents. Parents value the school highly. They mentioned that staff are very supportive and how you and your team support not just their children but families as well. Staff 'go out of their way to help', 'they are always there to help children and us if we need it' and 'children love the teachers because they know they really care' are typical comments received from parents.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- achievement in reading continues to improve across the school
- they continue to keep a close eye on making sure that pupils, particularly those that are of middle ability, are challenged in their learning so that more achieve greater depth and reach higher standards
- the attendance of pupils rises still further and in particular that the number of pupils who are late to school reduces.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Eastwood  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and other members of your leadership team. I also met with the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding records and your children and families officer. I met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, and I spoke to a representative of Salford local authority. We visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of the 21 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of six parents spoken to before the school day. I took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and spoke to staff during the day. I also met with a group of pupils. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school. I looked at a number of documents including: information about pupils' achievement, your school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, behaviour and incident logs and documents relating to safeguarding.