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Mrs J Williams
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Williams

Short inspection of Greave Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 7 March 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your school went through a significant period of turmoil last year which affected how staff and parents felt about school at this time. However, the school has now turned a corner. Along with your governing body, you acted swiftly to tackle the low staff morale, loss of direction and parental concerns. Under your dynamic leadership, the school has quickly regained its enthusiasm. You have created a 'buzz' about learning among staff and pupils and the school is now settled so pupils can feel happy and flourish, both academically and in their personal development. You and your team's commitment to the pupils and their families has rebuilt a strong sense of care and nurture for the whole school community.

A few responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, still reflect the concerns that parents have about the school. However, the large majority of parents who spoke to me, or responded to Parent View, were positive about the school and would recommend it to others. A number of parents acknowledge the recent improvements and, in particular, appreciate that you and your staff are 'helpful and very approachable'. They say that their child 'is happy in school'. It is clear that you and your team have worked hard to re-establish parents' confidence, but I agree that building these relationships further through good-quality communication remains a priority.

Staff say you 'lead by example'. Your enthusiasm and open approach has regained

their trust. As a result, the very large majority who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are proud to be part of Greave, and say that they are treated fairly, with respect and they feel well supported. Staff share your vision and aspirations for the school and there is a strong sense of team working to drive continued improvement.

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 above national averages. Similarly at the end of key stage 1, an above average proportion of pupils reached both the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics.

At the end of key stage 2, an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in reading and writing while performance in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling was in line with national averages. You are aware that low prior attaining pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieved less well. This continues to be a priority for the school. The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling was comparable with or just above national averages. However, you are mindful that these proportions need to improve further. 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 and also at higher standards.

The recent drop in attendance and rise in persistent absence is not typical for the school, where historically attendance has been similar to national averages. Attendance is a high priority for the school and good attendance is prominently celebrated. You have good-quality systems for monitoring attendance and have had notable successes in tackling individual pupils' absence where it has been higher than it should be.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified a need to improve attainment in writing in the early years by developing the range of activities and stimulus to write. You were also asked to raise the quality of teaching, particularly in writing in key stage 1, by ensuring that pupils were given targets that closely matched their individual needs. Leaders have addressed all these aspects effectively and have ensured that improvements have taken place.

Writing has a high profile. The whole school, including the early years, has embraced a consistent approach to writing that immerses pupils in reading texts to stimulate their imaginations, sense of fun, and create a purpose for their written work. For example, in the early years children were extremely enthusiastic about engaging in a range of activities and writing about characters such as 'carrot' and the 'evil pea' from Sue Hendra's picture book 'Supertato'. In another class, the teacher dressed up as a character from a publishing company. Pupils set about editing their Roald Dahl biographies with excitement and purpose. As a result, pupils are motivated to write and outcomes across the school are good. Pupils across the whole school are provided with writing targets in the front of their

books. Targets are based on regular, ongoing assessment by teachers and are checked often to ensure that pupils' needs are being met. Pupils of all ages are confident to talk about where they are in their learning and their next steps.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have further improved the safety and security of the school and it is clear that you view safeguarding as everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding records are kept rigorously, are detailed and reviewed regularly to ensure they meet statutory requirements. Regular and appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken and up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Your pastoral family support officer is very effective and is highly valued by parents for her care and support of vulnerable pupils and families. She has exceptionally effective relationships with parents and other agencies and is instrumental in contributing to the good safeguarding of the vulnerable pupils in your care.

Pupils say they feel very safe and well cared for in school: they feel confident that adults will help them if needed. A very small number of parents expressed a concern about poor behaviour and bullying in school. You are aware of their concerns and have put measures in place to address them; these appear to have settled the situation. The very large majority of parents who shared their views with me either did not consider bullying an issue that they were aware of, or stated that bullying was rare and quickly followed up by the school. Pupils confirmed that bullying and inappropriate behaviour was very rare and felt that adults deal with any issues quickly. Pupils of all ages talk with knowledge about the ways they can stay safe in a range of situations, including personally and online. Most parents feel that you and the staff keep their children safe and well looked after.

Inspection findings

- You know your school well, have an accurate view of its priorities and high expectations regarding the further improvements the school needs to make. The relatively newly constituted governing body is very supportive, challenges you appropriately and has been decisive in its actions to improve the school. Middle leaders make a strong and enthusiastic contribution to the drive for school improvement. As a result, there is good capacity to improve the school further.
- You are taking action to improve further the achievement of low prior attaining pupils so they reach expected standards. For example, you have quickly established intervention groups for these pupils based on refined assessment information. You monitor their progress closely to ensure that their needs are being met precisely. I agree with you that in order to accelerate learning further, you need to increase the range of ways that you support these pupils.
- You have similarly identified what you refer to as 'middle aspiring' pupils. You believe these pupils could achieve higher standards in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. The increased consistency of approach in classrooms and across your new teaching team is resulting in good-quality teaching and learning experiences for these pupils. Pupils also

benefit from higher expectations, more challenging activities and good-quality resources to support their learning. However, pupils are not always being asked exactly the right questions to stretch their thinking and extend them sufficiently.

- There are a number of strengths within the school. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are very proud of their school. Pupils feel very much part of their learning and are delighted about the responsibilities they have for making improvements, for example as digital leaders, mathematics champions or members of the learning team. The latter are a group of pupils chosen from across key stage 2 who promote learning in school. They visit classrooms, report to staff and governors, and make presentations in assembly about the good things they see and how some areas could be improved.
- Pupils' personal development is a central focus for the school and much work has been done to re-establish strengths in this area. For example, the school has created a 'kindness' wall, located centrally in the hall and talked about in assembly. Pupils have the opportunity to add a sticky note to share an act of kindness seen or done to them. This busy, vibrant wall is a wonderful visual representation of the strong ethos and values of the school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to strengthen communication with parents and maintain a focus on driving school improvement
- pupils, particularly those with low prior attainment and those of middle ability, make the gains they are capable of
- they increase the strategies used to support low prior attaining pupils
- teachers develop further their questioning skills to extend pupils' thinking.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Stockport. 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, the acting deputy headteacher and middle leaders. I also met with the person responsible for maintaining safeguarding and your pastoral family support worker. I met with three governors, including the chair

of the governing body, and I spoke to a representative of Stockport local authority. We visited lessons and I scrutinised pupils' work. I took account of the 91 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the views of 10 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.