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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Helena Dunsdon
Headteacher
Cross Lane
Salterforth
Barnoldswick
Lancashire
BB18 5UD

Dear Mrs Dunsdon

Short inspection of Salterforth Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 September 2012.

This school continues to be good.

- The leadership team has maintained, and built on, the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection, despite some instability in staffing and a slight dip in achievement last year. Groups of parents, pupils and governors spoken to during the inspection recognise the improvements you, your leadership team and staff have made to the school, particularly in the last year to ensure that the quality of teaching and standards remains good.
- You, along with your leadership team and governors, aim to ensure that every pupil is encouraged to achieve their best in a nurturing environment at Salterforth Primary School. Leaders are determined to provide the highest quality of education and, through their knowledge of each pupil, recognise when further support is required to help pupils achieve well. The learning environment is purposeful, calm and respectful. Pupils live out the strapline 'together we are REAL' with its focus on respect, encouragement, achievement and learning. There is a welcoming and warm feeling to the school, with strong relationships between staff and pupils. Parents say, 'this is a wonderful school' and appreciate the 'family atmosphere'. They are also delighted with the support offered to pupils transferring from other schools. One parent stated that they, 'had every confidence in the headteacher'; another added that leaders and staff, 'encourage all children to do well'.
- Your leadership team has provided for a range of academic, social and emotional support, particularly to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This has had such positive benefits to pupils that the school has gained a reputation locally for the quality of its provision and support to parents,

and further pupils have joined the school. You and your staff team have reviewed the curriculum, and teachers plan topics which inspire pupils' interests. Parents and pupils value the range and variety of extra-curricular activities, which includes bikeability training and cooking.

- You and your team have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' questioning is well targeted and allows pupils to demonstrate their prior knowledge and understanding. Pupils state that they have a variety of strategies to use to improve their work, including confidence that staff will support them to overcome misconceptions. A focus on word problems and investigations allows pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding and encourages them to explain their mathematical thinking. Consequently, pupils are becoming more confident when tackling mathematical word problems.
- Pupils' books show their developing use of vocabulary, increased variation in sentence structure and improving grammatical awareness. Teachers' focus on these aspects of literacy ensures that pupils are combining the secretarial aspects of writing and their creativity to produce writing of an improving quality. Pupils' spelling is showing signs of improvement due to good phonics teaching and spelling pattern investigations. However, progress is still not consistent and this means that too few middle-ability and most-able pupils reach the higher standards of writing expected of pupils from similar starting points.
- The curriculum has been reviewed and includes opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of their locality as well as the customs and cultures of other countries. It has been designed using the local authority's model to ensure that the national curriculum is covered, but also reflects the school's context. As a result, the curriculum meets pupils' needs and promotes learning well.
- Careful and meticulous planning across the early years is allowing leaders to ensure that future children joining the Reception class have an appropriate induction. The Reception classroom is bright and vibrant. It is well resourced and well organised to allow children to access play areas and equipment. The good use of wall displays promotes and celebrates children's work. The outdoor area is very well resourced to enable effective delivery of the various areas of learning. High-quality teaching ensures that all children make good progress from their starting points. Learning journeys scrutinised during the inspection show that most children are working at age-related expectations. Effective teaching assistant support encourages good progress for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- School assessment, tracking data and discussions with leaders show that progress and attainment are monitored closely, with support given where needed. Leaders recognise that standards dipped last year, but have ensured that current pupils are on track to improve on last year's end-of-key-stage results through appropriate challenge and support in the performance management of staff.
- Teaching assistants are well qualified and trained to deliver a variety of interventions to boost pupils' academic and social development and increase their confidence and resilience. They are particularly passionate and adept at

supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities due to their deep knowledge of individual pupils and their specific needs. As a result of their support and the very strong leadership of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), disadvantaged pupils make good (and often, better) progress from their starting points.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. The vast majority of pupils listen carefully to teachers and follow instructions promptly. Pupils state that there is no bullying in this school. Pupils play co-operatively and 'keep an eye out for friends'. Pupils value the additions to the outdoor space and the small secluded spots for quiet activities, for example reading with a friend.
- The most able and middle-ability pupils are not being challenged consistently to achieve higher levels. Work in their books and discussions with pupils suggests that some activities are not sufficiently challenging. A small number of pupils in most classes were able to complete their learning activities quickly as the work was not pitched at an appropriate level.
- Attendance rates of all pupils and groups of pupils are better than national averages. Leaders have implemented very good procedures to tackle absenteeism. However, leaders are aware that significant absence of a small number of pupils last year was due to very specific individual circumstances.

Safeguarding is effective.

- Safeguarding procedures are robust. Records are maintained meticulously. The single central record is compliant with statutory regulations. Staff training is appropriate and up to date; governors are also trained in basic awareness and how to identify and prevent radicalisation. Partnerships with agencies to support vulnerable families are strong. Pupils feel safe in this school and parents agree.
- Pupils are appropriately protected when accessing the internet. Any breaches are dealt with swiftly and sensitively. Pupils are very aware about their own personal safety through age-appropriate lessons. The decision to offer swimming lessons to Years 1 and 2 was based on a very clear and specific safeguarding reason.

Inspection findings

- The curriculum has been reviewed twice in the last few years to ensure that it not only includes all content from the national curriculum, but also the key skills which school leaders believe are equally important. A range of interesting cross-curricular topics inspire pupils to learn. Pupils enjoy finding out about a range of historical topics, particularly remembering key facts from topics taught. Pupils work around school demonstrates a good understanding of these topics. The school curriculum is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular clubs, residential visits and day trips. Pupils speak very highly about all of these.
- The curriculum is monitored each term by the curriculum leader, and findings are shared with subject leaders for further analysis and action planning. Governors have set up a curriculum committee to meet with named staff to monitor the implementation and development of the curriculum. Governors feel that has been

very beneficial and has had a positive impact on standards in foundation subjects particularly. Inspection evidence supports their views.

- You and your leadership team have a good view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The local authority adviser recognises the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and agrees with leaders' judgements. Your governing body has supported you in tackling some personnel issues over the past two years. This has been done sensitively and appropriately in an attempt to maintain the quality of teaching and learning. However, in 2016, results suggested that boys had performed better than girls in school at both key stage 1 and 2.
- Pupils' books in Years 1 and 2 show there are few, if any, differences in the quality of boys' and girls' writing. A whole-school focus on improving pupils' handwriting is paying dividends in the neatly produced writing books. Pupils, especially girls, state that the school treats all pupils equally. Leaders identified that a small group of Year 3 pupils underachieved in writing last year. As a result of high-quality teaching, these pupils are now making strong progress. Pupils' writing across the school, in all year groups, shows good description and word choices, expanded noun phrases, adverbs and a range of connectives. These elements make pupils' writing interesting to read.
- Current pupil data suggests that there will be no significant differences between the attainment and progress of boys and girls this year. Pupils' books show that all pupils are making good progress, and that end-of-year projections, which suggest that school results will be much better than last year, are accurate.
- Support and teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. These pupils make very strong progress and attain highly due to carefully planned teaching, which matches pupils' identified learning needs.
- Leaders have developed robust procedures to monitor pupil progress and ensure that appropriate support or adaptations are made to the curriculum where necessary. Communication with parents is vital in building up the 'big picture' of pupils' needs. The SENCo is passionate about supporting pupils in a nurturing environment. Parents value the support offered by the SENCo and teaching assistants to meet their children's specific needs. Good partnerships and networking with outside agencies help ensure that pupils receive effective provision for their identified needs. School leaders have made appropriate adaptations to resources to make them fully accessible to all pupils.
- Pupils are making good progress in their reading. They read with expression, have well-developed comprehension skills and use their phonic knowledge well to decode unknown words (they have a reasonable guess at their meaning). They can re-tell parts of the story and are developing comprehension skills. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about reading; they mention a wide range of favourite authors and read with intonation.
- Mathematics books in all year groups show good progress and understanding of number and shape. Pupils' abilities to reason are improving, and this is further developing their confidence in this subject. Pupils use correct mathematical vocabulary appropriately during work on fractions in Years 1 and 2, capacity in

the early years and shape in both key stage 2 classes. Teachers and other adults monitor pupils' work in books during the lesson and address any misconceptions relatively quickly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- there is greater consistency of good and outstanding teaching across the school;
- most-able pupils are challenged to meet higher standards; and
- middle-ability pupils are challenged so that more pupils meet the higher standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Ian Shackleton
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, 10 parents, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I spoke with the deputy headteacher, in her role as curriculum leader, and the school's SENCo. Also, I talked with small groups of pupils formally and informally around the school and in lessons. In addition, I jointly observed teaching and learning in all classes, and scrutinised writing and mathematics books from pupils in all year groups. I examined a range of documentation, including documents relating to attendance and safeguarding. I also looked at the school's self-evaluation of how well it is doing, the school's improvement priorities and the school's assessment information. I also undertook a review of the school's website. As part of the inspection, I considered 10 responses from parents to Ofsted's free-text service and nine responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.