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Mr S Purtill
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Purtill

Short inspection of Padiham Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 June 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 January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are incredibly passionate about your school and about ensuring a positive future for all the pupils in your care. Since your appointment shortly after the last inspection you have been unrelenting in maintaining the school's many strengths and in identifying improvements that needed to be made.

You are ably supported by the deputy and assistant headteachers. They have developed their leadership skills and have an excellent understanding of the school's position. They diligently evaluate the progress that pupils are making and ensure extra support for those who may need it, so that pupils make good progress.

Parents are highly supportive of the work of the school. One parent echoed the sentiments of many when they said, 'My child could not be at a better school.' Relationships between staff and parents are a particular strength of the school.

Staff morale is high; staff share your ambition for every child to do well. One commented, 'School is a very positive place to work where people feel valued and encouraged to deliver their best.' This is echoed by many other members of staff.

Teaching is good and as a result pupils make good progress. Teachers are well

trained and provide exciting learning opportunities for pupils. All staff have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve and this is reflected in the work that pupils produce. For example, pupils in Year 4 produced some interesting work about the Roman invasion, while pupils in Year 1 created effective pieces of writing about traditional tales.

You have made many changes to the school environment since the time of the previous inspection. The environment is welcoming and vibrant and a pleasant place in which to work and play. Pupils are very proud of their school and their behaviour is excellent. They get along well together and are polite and well mannered.

Governors are equally passionate about the school. They understand that the school is pivotal in your community. They support you and your leadership team very well, but they also understand that they need to ensure that they probe, question and hold you to account more thoroughly, in order to ensure that pupils sustain the good progress they are making.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. Teaching is good and as a result children make good progress. They thoroughly enjoy their learning and are keen to talk about what they are doing. One child asked me, 'Do you want to see my rocket blast off!? Let's count backwards.' Assessments of what the children can do are robust and relationships with parents are particularly strong.

The school values the effective support of the local authority. Regular visits help you to validate your accurate and honest self-evaluation.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other school leaders take your responsibilities very seriously. The establishment of a safeguarding team in school has proved very positive. The work of the learning mentor and designated safeguarding leader is highly effective and ensures that many vulnerable families get the support they need.

There is a culture of safety in the school. All staff are well trained and fully understand their individual responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Pupils say that they feel safe, and parents agree. Pupils report that there is no bullying and that if there was it would be dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are robust. You and governors ensure that systems for recruiting and vetting staff are secure and that all staff receive regular safeguarding updates in line with the government's latest guidelines.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection I focused on four lines of enquiry. The first looked at the achievement of pupils in mathematics, particularly that of girls and disadvantaged pupils. In 2016 pupils had not achieved as well in mathematics as they had in reading and writing, both in key stage 1 and key stage 2. You rightly identified

that pupils' basic skills and their ability to reason and question in mathematics needed to improve. Teaching of basic arithmetic skills has developed considerably and pupils are achieving well. While pupils have been given more opportunities to use their reasoning skills, this is not yet embedded across the school for all pupils. That said, pupils are making better progress in mathematics. An increased number of disadvantaged pupils and girls are now on track to achieve the higher standards.

- I also considered whether or not pupils had access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils study a wide range of subjects and topics. They are given opportunities to study their local area, including walking up Pendle Hill and taking part in an archaeological dig. The teaching of physical education (PE) is strong; the excellent sporting facilities allow pupils to learn a range of sports and skills. This work is enhanced by the work of specialist PE coaches. Computing is effective and the school has invested well in a range of information technology equipment. As a result, pupils make good progress in this area. The curriculum is complemented by an extensive choice of extra-curricular activities. These include sports, art, gardening and music clubs.
- Another line of enquiry was the effectiveness of phonics teaching. In 2016, results in the Year 1 phonics screening check were below the national average. Teachers and teaching assistants in key stage 1, led by the assistant headteacher, have transformed phonics teaching in your school. Lessons are engaging, enjoyable and fast-paced. For example, one group of pupils were learning how words change when an 'e' is added to the end. They held hands to make links between the letters and the sounds. Consequently, the number of pupils on track to achieve the Year 1 phonics screening check has increased this year. I heard pupils in Year 2 read. They were fluent and the most able read with expression; all pupils were able to use their knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words.
- Last, I looked at the attendance of pupils and in particular the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has worked extremely hard to improve the attendance of all pupils. This has been very successful and attendance rates for all pupils are now above the national average. In addition, the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved considerably and the very low attendance of some pupils has been eradicated. Leaders have achieved this through a range of strategies. For example, there is a weekly cup for the best class attendance and there are special rewards for those with 100% attendance. The school works closely with the local authority to encourage all families to bring their children to school regularly.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors stringently hold leaders to account for the improvements they are making
- pupils are given further opportunities to use their reasoning skills across the

mathematics curriculum.

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

Emma Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and other members of staff, including the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. I also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I met with pupils as they played on the school yard. In addition, I heard a group of pupils read and looked at their reading records.

I took account of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for parents and staff. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress and attainment, and the curriculum. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document and looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.