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Mr Sean Crosier
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Crosier

Short inspection of Accrington Huncoat Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 July 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. You provide dynamic leadership and have high aspirations for everyone. The school's motto, 'achieving together', provides a common sense of purpose and motivates pupils to develop as life-long learners. Your vision of, 'you can be whatever you want to be' and 'the sky's the limit', is shared by pupils and staff. Pupils are well prepared for secondary education.

The school's values of honesty, responsibility, cooperation, determination, respect, appreciation and caring shine through to create a harmonious and inclusive community. Many pupils join and leave the school during the year. Your staff team meets this challenge head on and helps pupils to settle in quickly. Teaching assistants support pupils who enter the school with very little confidence in English to thrive.

Pupils' work is celebrated through vibrant and colourful wall displays. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and take pride in their work. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive. As one pupil commented, 'Everyone is kind and friendly.' The pupils I spoke with are ambitious and relish the opportunity to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as sport, drama and music.

You are passionate about developing the talents of your colleagues and have

developed a strong team of driven and committed middle leaders. You have worked hard to create a cohesive staff community who feel well supported and challenged.

You have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders have improved the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning through training and evaluating the quality of learning in lessons and pupils' work. You have developed a creative curriculum, which is enriched with a wonderful variety of theme weeks and trips, including residential visits. Leaders track pupils' progress effectively. Pupils who are falling behind are well supported.

You have successfully addressed the area for improvement identified at the last inspection. Leaders have worked with teachers to ensure that they plan learning in such a way that all pupils, including the most able, are challenged to achieve their very best.

Pupils make good progress from their starting points. In 2016, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception and the percentage of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check were comparable to national averages. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was above average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in reading at the end of key stage 1 was below the national average. You have introduced a number of initiatives to address this and outcomes for pupils are now improving.

At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils achieved above those of a similar age at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in mathematics was significantly above the national average. You have rightly focused on improving the standards pupils achieve in writing. You have introduced a range of strategies and you expect more pupils to achieve at greater depth at the end of this year.

A small number of disadvantaged pupils did not make good enough progress at the end of key stage 1 or key stage 2 in 2016. You have taken action to rectify this, and the standards these pupils achieve have improved in English and mathematics. You are determined to improve the standards that disadvantaged pupils reach in science.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. For example, the single central record is well maintained and up to date. There is a strong culture of vigilance in the school. Staff and governors receive high-quality training. The designated safeguarding lead prepares regular short quizzes to 'keep staff on their toes'. Staff are aware of potential risks and know what to do if they have any concerns. Leaders have established strong relationships with external agencies. Pupils say they feel safe and bullying is rare. They are confident that staff would help them if they did have a

problem. The overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were very positive about the school's work to keep their children safe.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, Year 2 pupils did not perform as well as their peers nationally at the higher levels in reading. You identified this and implemented a number of strategies that are leading to better progress. You have relaunched the library, which is well stocked and regularly updated. High-quality, challenging texts across different genres motivate pupils. You celebrate reading by holding a book week and giving out awards for reading. Records show that pupils read regularly, including at home. You acknowledge that, while reading is improving across the school, this remains an area for further development. This is because, although pupils make good progress in reading, they do not achieve as well as other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2. You and your leaders recognise that, to do this, pupils' comprehension skills need to be developed.
- You recognised that, over time, pupils were not making enough progress in attaining the higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Teachers are now providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum. Pupils use precise and accurate vocabulary and different sentence structures to write imaginatively. You have improved ongoing training for staff and strengthened the moderation of pupils' work to ensure that standards are consistent. My review of your data and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that more pupils are on track to achieve the higher standards than in previous years.
- You had already identified that in 2016 a small group of disadvantaged pupils did not make enough progress at the end of key stages 1 and 2. You have established a detailed understanding of the barriers to learning for these pupils. You now ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide personalised support. For example, staff work with pupils to develop their speech and language skills. Work in pupils' books and the school's current assessment data show that these pupils are now catching up in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils who read to me were able to use their phonic skills well to interpret new words. Pupils regularly practise reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils have opportunities to create their own science investigations and develop scientific vocabulary. However, you acknowledge that the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in science is still not good enough.
- Attendance was above the national average for all pupils in 2016. However, disadvantaged pupils had higher persistent absence than found nationally. Leaders work tirelessly with families to improve attendance. Rigorous systems are in place to check why pupils are absent and to hold parents to account. You have introduced a range of incentives and rewards to encourage pupils to come to school regularly. The impact of these initiatives is that there has been a reduction in the number of disadvantaged pupils that are persistently absent this year.

- Governors bring a wealth of skills and experience to their roles. They support and challenge leaders effectively. Governors know the strengths and priorities of the school well through regular reports from leaders. As one governor commented, 'Children are safe and happy here. Every teacher knows every child's name.'
- Parents' views of the school are very positive. The overwhelming majority of those completing Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school to others. One parent commented, 'It is a fabulous school. Staff are approachable and treat children fairly. The headteacher is consistent and nips things in the bud quickly.'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they improve:

- the standards that pupils reach in reading by the end of key stage 2 by developing further pupils' comprehension skills
- the progress of disadvantaged pupils in science.

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

Ahmed Marikar
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of middle leaders. I met with seven members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with a representative from the local authority. I met with eight pupils from key stage 2 and spoke with others during breaktimes. I visited a number of classes, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. I carried out a work scrutiny of pupils' work across the school. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. I took account of 61 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 17 free-text responses. I also considered the views of 21 staff and 28 pupils through Ofsted's online questionnaires. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe, records of training, safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.