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Mrs Nicola Parkinson
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Nicola Parkinson

Short inspection of Park Road Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 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 May 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, your team of staff and governors are ambitious for the pupils, and there is gritty resolve to further raise attainment and increase pupils' progress. High expectations and a determined belief that developing staff professionally will benefit your pupils, characterises your school.

From the spontaneous handshake and 'welcome to our school' from one pupil, through to the keenness of others to talk to me about their exciting learning, it is clear that pupils are happy to be part of Park Road. Pupils wear their uniforms smartly. Relationships with each other and staff are positive and pupils thrive in the opportunities they are offered. No pupil I spoke with could suggest a way to improve the school and several said things like, 'We love our little school.' Pupils behave well, showing resilience and concentration to achieve their own ambitions.

Pupils have a sincere awareness that everyone is different and believe that anyone would be welcome at their school. A comment by one pupil summed up this sentiment, 'Everyone is unique in their own way.' The fantastic outdoor area is greatly appreciated by pupils who enjoy the space and the feeling of adventure of the different activities, such as the adventure trail, walking wall and the chickens. They consider that learning is fun.

All of the parents I spoke with are very satisfied with all aspects of school life.

Several parents explained how they had moved their child from other schools to be part of Park Road; others told me how much the support of leaders had helped. Most parents who completed the Parent View are satisfied, and many said that their children love going to school.

Over the five years since the previous inspection, there have been many changes in the school. You, your staff and governors have successfully built on the many strengths identified at the previous inspection and tackled the areas for improvement. You have developed the skills of subject leaders so effectively that several have left the school to take up promoted posts in other schools. Those subject leaders who remain in the school have benefited immensely from your investment in their training. Several commented that professional development courses have increased their knowledge and understanding of their subject, equipping them with expertise, confidence and competence to lead their subjects well. Morale is high; staff work together as a team and help and support each other, as one teacher put it, 'like never before'. Most of the staff responded as such in the Ofsted survey.

Experienced governors, coming to the end of their tenure, have left and made way for enthusiastic new members, so governance is refreshed too. New members have specific expertise, which will benefit the school. Roles and responsibilities have been reviewed and the committee structure re-organised. Governors are visiting the school often so that they can build up a thorough knowledge of the school.

Despite the changes in staffing and governors, you and your team have made sure that pupils continue to do well. Our visits to the classrooms and looking at pupils' workbooks showed me the variety of learning activities that pupils cover and how engaged they are in this learning. Pupils are making good progress across the school. However, you recognise that there is work to do to make sure that new governors and staff are supported to make a strong contribution to the effectiveness of the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have made sure that keeping pupils safe is everyone's responsibility at Park Road. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have a very rigorous approach and commission advice and support from an experienced safeguarding officer. Rigorous checks are made to make sure that staff who work at the school are all suitable. Staff are trained well to spot signs that may indicate that pupils are suffering from harm or neglect, and very regular updates reinforce the messages from this training. Consequently, staff know exactly what action to take if worried and carry a handy reminder with their identity badge. Records are detailed and meticulously kept via a secure on-line system. You monitor this rigorously, take action when necessary and work effectively with relevant external agencies. This means that support for pupils and their families is available as early as possible.

Inspection findings

- The 2016 results for Year 6 show that pupils achieved well overall, especially in reading. In contrast, pupils did not do as well in mathematics. Girls did less well than boys. You acted quickly to identify the reason for this dip and took suitable appropriate action to remedy this. A whole-school mathematics week raised the importance of mathematics. Each classroom has a mathematics wall to support pupils in their work. You have purchased better resources for every class so that pupils' work in mathematics is stimulating and enjoyable and they have aids to help them 'work things out'. You have invested heavily in staff training, so that teachers and teaching assistants know how to support pupils in problem solving and reasoning techniques. Staff model the use of mathematics vocabulary so that correct use of mathematical terms is becoming second nature to pupils. Expectations are high, 'more maths' is happening for the youngest pupils through to Year 6. Pupils' mathematics books show that these actions are starting to pay dividends. Pupils cover a wide range of mathematics and swiftly apply new concepts. As a result, pupils are making good gains in their learning. Unvalidated test results for Year 6, for this year, show that attainment in mathematics has increased significantly and that the gap between the achievement of girls and boys is no longer present.
- The small number of the less able pupils, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged, appeared to do less well in 2016. Although this small group of pupils did not reach the expected standard for their age, evidence shows that they made good progress from their starting points. Throughout the school, these pupils are doing as well as other pupils. Books show that many are surging ahead in their learning. Pupils' progress meetings, between leaders, teachers and teaching assistants, rigorously check the progress of each pupil. Extra activities are quickly put in place to support or challenge pupils, so that they are able to achieve well. Extra funding is used effectively to make sure that these pupils learn well. Leaders use external agencies when necessary and are totally committed to pursuing all routes to support a pupil who has a particular need.
- Over time, attendance rates have been above the national average. However, in 2016, some disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were not attending regularly. You take decisive action to make sure that all absences are followed up. You work with families who may have a difficulty in bringing their child to school. You work with, and support, the family and any particular needs that they may have and take appropriate action. At times, staff have even collected pupils from home so they would not miss learning. As a result, several of these pupils have increased their attendance, are ready to learn and are making progress.
- You have worked hard to implement a system for tracking pupils' progress across the school and you have a wealth of information. You know your pupils exceptionally well and know their achievement. You rightly evaluate the progress of each class across the school and that of different groups, such as disadvantaged pupils and others. You recognise that currently this information shows progress from the start of each year and you have plans to refine it so that it gives you a fuller picture of progress from the Reception Year to Year 6.

As you said, 'That is my holiday job!'

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all members of the governing body use their expertise to work together as a team to support leaders in the next phase on the school's journey
- new staff are trained so they are equipped to lead a subject and contribute to the effectiveness of the school
- the system for gathering information on pupils' achievement is refined, so that the whole-school data reflects the good progress that pupils are making from the Reception Year to Year 6.

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

Yours sincerely

Eileen Mulgrew
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher, the safeguarding officer, the special educational needs coordinator, three subject leaders and a representative from the local authority. I held discussions with the chair, and held a telephone conversation with the vice-chair, of the governing body; four more governors joined us for the final feedback. I spoke with about 15 parents at the start and end of the school day. I met with a group of 10 pupils and spoke with many more during breaktime and as I toured the school. We visited every classroom to talk with pupils and staff, observe pupils at work and look at their books. I took account of the 47 responses to Parent View, including the 22 free-text responses. I considered the 15 responses from the staff online questionnaire. I also evaluated the 64 online responses completed by pupils.