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Mr Robert Metcalfe
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Dear Mr Metcalfe

Short inspection of Oakgrove School

Following my visit to the school on 3 October 2017 with Doreen Davenport, Ofsted Inspector, 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 effective leadership and have an accurate understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs improving. Staff feel well supported and challenged by senior leaders. Staff morale is high. Governors know the school well and provide highly effective support to school leaders. Staff and governors share your drive to make the school even better. You and all staff have created a safe, calm and emotionally secure environment for your pupils. You share your firm belief that trust is an essential prerequisite to engaging your pupils in learning. Therefore, you and all staff have ensured that the school is a place in which pupils know adults can be trusted. The interactions between pupils and staff are extremely positive, especially on the rare occasion when the behaviour of pupils was seen to be challenging. Your emphasis on promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils is in evidence at all times. Pupils say they like school and feel safe. They appear happy and engaged in lessons. Pupils' behaviour throughout school was almost always exemplary. The very small number of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire made it difficult to accurately ascertain the views of the parents. However, the small number to whom inspectors spoke were very positive about the school.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was asked to make sure that governors were providing greater support to school leaders. The current governing body has

gone to great lengths to ensure that all newly appointed governors have the necessary skills and expertise to provide you with the support needed. Governors' detailed knowledge of the school enables them to carry out their duties very effectively. You were also asked to improve the effectiveness of teaching by more closely matching tasks to the needs of learners. You have successfully done this. With an appropriate level of support from teachers or teaching assistants, pupils are able to complete challenging tasks and demonstrate their growing levels of knowledge and understanding. You rightly identify that pupils could make greater progress in writing, and have recently begun to take action to address this. You are also aware that progress in all subjects could be more closely tracked.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff and governors are well trained in areas of risk to pupils. Staff know pupils well and are quick to respond to any cause for concern. Local authority safeguarding processes and documents are used to report all concerns that may need further investigation. Record-keeping is up to date. Your and the governors' rapid response in reporting concerns to other agencies, and following their advice and guidance, provides clear evidence of your highly effective safeguarding practices. School leaders understand that pupils' persistent absence is a safeguarding concern and act quickly when attendance is low. Attendance is rigorously monitored. Leaders liaise closely with parents about their child's attendance. Parents are contacted directly if their child is absent from school. As a result, persistent absence has reduced. School leaders ensure that lessons about e-safety are fully integrated into the curriculum. Leaders are proactive in ensuring that pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe. You consider the emotional well-being of pupils to be of the utmost importance. For example, each morning pupils use an emotional barometer to indicate how they are feeling that day. This enables staff to very quickly identify pupils who may be feeling vulnerable and therefore plan the pupils' day accordingly.

Inspection findings

- The first focus for my visit was how well pupils achieve academically. School leaders use detailed systems to monitor pupils' progress. All pupils make rapid progress from their below typical starting points. School data for 2016/17 shows that almost all pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. The assessment system includes clearly defined criteria which enable teachers to measure progress consistently and accurately, and readily understand if pupils are not on track to reach their targets. If pupils are making less progress than expected, you are able to discuss in detail the personal and often external factors that may explain why individuals do not meet their expected targets. Staff take swift action to make sure pupils do not fall further behind.
- During 2016/17, a sharp focus on reading has led to rapidly improved progress of pupils across school in comparison to progress in writing. As senior leaders have seen the impact of this clearly defined focus on reading, they are using the same successful approach to aim to rapidly improve progress in writing during

2017/18. You have identified that pupils need to write more accurately and be provided with regular opportunities to write in a range of subjects.

- You have put in place supportive and highly effective measures to encourage regular attendance. Detailed attendance data is collected, monitored and discussed with pupils and parents. You make sure pupils understand that coming to school each day, and fully participating in lessons, is what enables them to learn most. Most pupils have responded positively to your message. For example, school data shows that on joining your school, pupils' attendance rapidly improves in comparison to their attendance in previous schools. Pupils say they want to come to school because 'it's amazing' and 'you get to do a lot more work'.
- The second line of enquiry for my visit was how effectively the curriculum meets the needs of pupils. Pupils' workbooks and school-wide displays show that the curriculum includes a broad range of subjects. You ensure that pupils access a wealth of opportunities to learn outside the classroom. For example, younger pupils take part in regular activities in the well-resourced outdoor areas. Older pupils attend an annual outdoor pursuits residential visit to the Lake District. Pupils are also involved in a gardening project, being responsible for looking after planters in the local high street. This is successfully adding to pupils' personal development and social understanding.
- During the inspection, pupils appeared very happy in their lessons and were actively engaged in a range of subjects. The teaching observed was tailored to the needs of the group and personalised to individuals' interests. Lesson activities were challenging and pupils showed great resilience when presented with challenging tasks. Although a range of subjects are included within the curriculum, pupils' workbooks showed that there was limited depth to subjects other than English and mathematics, and that the feedback given to pupils was less consistent. The strong focus on targets and next steps in English and mathematics was not as evident in other subjects. This has contributed to pupils not making as strong progress in these subjects.
- The third focus was to look at how well pupils behave. School leaders and staff very successfully and expertly use a range of strategies that help pupils regulate their behaviour, and remove the pupils' greatest barrier to learning. As a result of staff guidance and support, the behaviour of some pupils has improved so significantly that that have been successfully reintegrated in mainstream primary and high schools. The well-established and highly valued link you have with a local primary school, and the meticulous nature in which you plan pupils' transition to mainstream schools, is a strength of your school. The transition coordinator, working with pupils' families and staff, ensures that pupils are successful in both the link primary and in their new high schools.
- You, governors and staff are aware of the challenge you face in increasing the number of parents who readily work in partnership with you. However, albeit slowly, you and senior leaders determinedly and successfully support more parents to participate and engage with you about their child's learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils throughout the school make greater progress in writing
- tracking of pupils' progress is extended to include subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics, to aid pupils' better progress in these subjects.

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

Elizabeth Loftus
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

Meetings took place with you, your deputy headteacher, and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and other members of staff. Inspectors also spoke with a local authority adviser linked to the school, and 10 pupils. Inspectors, together with senior leaders, completed a learning walk throughout school which included a short visit to all classes to observe teaching and look at pupils' work. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including around school and at breaktime and lunchtime. Inspectors scrutinised a range of supporting documentation about safeguarding and child protection, the school's self-evaluation, monitoring information and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records related to attendance, and information relating to pupils' achievement. Inspectors spoke with a small number of parents and took into account the single response from a parent on Ofsted's free-text service. Inspectors also considered 11 responses to the online staff questionnaire.