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Miss G McGuigan and Mr P Marriott
Acting co-headteachers
Haslam Park Primary School
Wigan Road
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Dear Miss McGuigan and Mr Marriott

Short inspection of Haslam Park Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 19 October 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. There has been some instability in staffing in recent years, but you have managed this well. You have an accurate and reflective view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. As the school has grown in numbers, you have set out clear actions to enable ongoing improvement. For example, you have increased teachers' expectations and improved how they challenge pupils so that an increased number are working at the highest standard. This is enabling pupils to make progress across a range of subjects that is at least good. The governing body and the local authority have worked well together to establish an effective co-headship that has not just maintained standards but improved them, especially in reading and mathematics in key stage 2. Although the local authority provides a 'light touch' level of support, it has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors are well-informed and challenge appropriately and make a constructive contribution towards improving the school.

Parents are supportive. All comments from the parents I met were positive, as were the majority of the responses to Parent View. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary as is their attitude to learning. Pupils enjoy school and comment on how much they value their learning. Haslam Park is an inclusive school where pupils are valued as individuals. Comments from pupils included, 'I'm proud of being here because we are a multi-faith school.'

The previous inspection identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in a wider range of subjects. It also

highlighted the need for you to make more effective use of technology to support pupils' learning. You provide a wide variety of activities for your pupils to enrich their learning across a range of subjects. Staff development has been a strength, which has also led to better outcomes in a wide range of subjects because staff now have secure subject knowledge across the school. Teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils so that an increased number are working at the highest standard. The curriculum changes have also involved parents, who commented that they welcome the support that the school provides for them to help their children at home. The use of technology to support learning is now a strength. You have invested in new equipment that is used across the curriculum. The quality work that pupils produce is displayed in corridors to celebrate their achievements.

During the inspection, we discussed the next steps for the school to improve further. You acknowledge that there is a need to further improve outcomes, especially in the early years, by refining teaching of communication, literacy and language skills. This is particularly the case for pupils who have English as an additional language. You also agreed that you should embed the recent changes made to the teaching of reading and writing, to improve outcomes in key stage 1.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding in your school. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including protocols and practices for record-keeping. Systems to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children in the school are secure. Governors are very knowledgeable about their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

Leaders and staff know pupils and their families extremely well. This, coupled with the training that staff receive, means that you are all well placed to spot any signs or symptoms of abuse. Safety is taught throughout the curriculum and you work with local services to teach pupils about issues arising in the local community. Pupils discuss how they are taught to keep safe such as in e-safety lessons and through visits from the fire brigade.

Inspection findings

- We agreed a number of key issues that this inspection would focus on. The first of these was how leaders are improving outcomes in early years and key stage 1, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. You monitor how you are spending the pupil premium funding closely. This enables you to identify the strategies that are working and those that are not. If additional teaching is not helping pupils to make progress, then you will look for alternative strategies. Barriers to pupils' learning are identified and strategies put in place to remove them. Strong progress in early years from starting points is clear in children's work, in discussions with children and in your internal assessment information. For example, parents are invited to stay and play with their children and this results in parents being highly involved in gathering evidence to show their own children's achievements at home. This adds depth to the teacher's judgements.

- In key stage 1, you have made effective use of quality reading books to inspire improved writing, especially for disadvantaged pupils. The investment you have made in developing the staff team has led to improvements in writing and reading and has had a significant impact on pupils' progress. You have strengthened pupils' learning by improving teachers' subject knowledge and questioning skills. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest standard this year in reading has risen significantly, and the proportion of those achieving the expected standard is improving. However, we agreed that you need to embed the recent changes made to the teaching of reading and writing to improve outcomes over time in key stage 1.
- Another key issue we agreed to look at was how leaders have improved pupils' attendance. This has been tackled effectively in a systematic way. Scrutiny of the reasons for absence has led to more targeted interventions, improving the rates of attendance. Overall attendance has risen to being broadly in line with the national average. This has happened over the last three years, when the number of pupils on roll has risen steadily. There has been a marked improvement in the attendance of disadvantaged pupils over the last three years. There is now no difference between the attendance of these pupils and that of other pupils in the school. The attendance of pupils who have special educational needs support has also risen due to the work of the attendance team. Punctuality has also improved significantly due to closer monitoring in this area and to staff acting on these matters in a more timely manner.
- Finally, we agreed to consider the improvements made in the teaching of phonics. Pupils' progress is improving, especially for disadvantaged pupils, and pupils make better progress from their starting points. You have redesigned phonics teaching so that it is more bespoke to pupils' needs. The teaching of this subject is consistent and systematic across Reception and Year 1. Pupils who need additional support access quality teaching in small groups, delivered by very skilled support staff. This means that those who did not pass the phonics check in Year 1 are supported effectively so that they catch up. The pass rate in Year 2 is high. You and your leaders have provided training for all staff and have changed the way you teach phonics and spelling. This has allowed teachers to share good practice within school. Leaders have rightly increased the time allocated to the teaching of phonics so that you continue to raise standards in phonics. However, you acknowledge that there is a need to further improve outcomes for pupils who have English as an additional language by focusing on improving communication, language and literacy skills.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- improve outcomes, especially in early years, for pupils who have English as an additional language, by refining the teaching of communication, language and literacy skills
- embed the changes made to the teaching of reading and writing in key stage 1 so that pupils' outcomes improve and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hunter
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Throughout the inspection I spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I met with both of you, the safeguarding officer and the attendance leader to discuss improvements in their areas of responsibility. I looked at learning in pupils' books. I also spoke to the local authority improvement partner.

I reviewed documentation which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

I visited classes along with you to observe pupils' learning. I met with governors to discuss aspects of school leadership and management. I reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I also completed a review of the school's website.