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Mr S Clark
Arundale Primary School
Lowry Grove
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Dear Mr Clark

Short inspection of Arundale Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 4 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

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

Both you and your leadership team have worked successfully to provide a good quality of education for the pupils in your care. You have focused on developing teachers' skills in matching pupils' learning to their needs. This reflects the good progress that pupils make over time, especially in mathematics and English.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the strategic role that it plays in the leadership of the school. It is committed to continuous improvement. The chair of the governing body is uncompromising in her view that 'the needs of the children must come first'. As a result of this culture of care, governors make a positive contribution to the ethos of school.

Both you and the school's governors have developed strong links between the school and the local community. For example, you recently invited members of the community to a careers fair for older pupils. Activities such as this support leaders' mission to ensure that pupils have the highest aspirations.

At Arundale, pupils are very well behaved and friendly towards each other. Older pupils have plentiful opportunities to show their care for younger pupils. Pupils enjoy a variety of roles, including being prefects and school councillors. A member of your enterprise group told me that they raise money by selling healthy snacks.

Most recently, they spent the profits on outdoor play equipment. They were understandably proud of this achievement.

The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and vibrant. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to explore the creative arts. Older pupils play brass instruments and several are members of brass bands. Information and communication technology is also a strength of your curriculum. Pupils enjoy developing their skills in a well-resourced computer suite. As a result, they achieve at a high level. In 2016, your school won the top prize in an international film competition.

Alongside the vibrant curriculum, you have created a school environment which is both stimulating and exciting. Outdoor spaces are available to all pupils. They enjoy a range of activities, including gardening. They particularly enjoyed growing potatoes. A visiting artist works with pupils, linking art to other areas of the curriculum. Teachers display a broad array of artwork around the school with high-quality writing alongside it. As a consequence of this focus, your school has achieved a nationally recognised award for art.

The parents with whom I spoke were very positive about the school. They noted that teachers solve problems that arise. They also said teachers take a 'firm but fair' approach to managing behaviour. Parents particularly like the 'special days' where pupils celebrate music and the creative arts.

As part of your work to continuously improve the school, you were asked at the last inspection to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. This was to ensure that more pupils reached above-average standards in mathematics. Overall, leaders have achieved this. Leaders have trained to provide appropriate challenge for the most able pupils. As a result, the number of pupils who leave your school at the end of key stage 2 having achieved above-average standards in mathematics has increased. In most year groups, standards are either in line with or above average. However, in some year groups, staff still are not putting their training into maximum effect. Consequently, there remains a small number of most-able pupils who can and should achieve even more in both English and mathematics.

At the last inspection, inspectors also asked you to increase the time and attention that teachers give to demonstrating and explaining ways to solve problems in mathematics. Leaders have successfully achieved this. You have provided staff with effective training and resources in this area. Pupils have access to a wide range of equipment to support their learning. This has had a very positive effect on pupils' performance. Pupils approach mathematical problems methodically and efficiently. They work well together. Progress over time is positive.

Without doubt, you value the part that parents play in supporting their children's learning. Your staff provide homework to all pupils. However, we agreed that parents of pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 require a greater range of homework opportunities to enable them to support their children's learning in English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality.

Your school site is safe and secure and the identity of visitors is closely checked. Staff have a clear understanding of what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' well-being or safety. Leaders follow up these concerns quickly. Governors and staff have completed safeguarding training. This includes training in the 'Prevent' duty and the safer recruitment of staff. Health and safety checks are routinely undertaken. These procedures ensure that leaders keep pupils free from harm and that risks to pupils are minimised.

Leaders and staff place great emphasis on pupils protecting themselves. You ensure that they develop strategies to stay safe. This includes the use of computer technology. Older pupils have recently taken part in focused information and communication technology lessons looking at the dangers of sexting, fake news and radicalisation. As a result, pupils have developed a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe online.

Where leaders need to take swift action, they do. For example, you quickly and efficiently dealt with missing information on the school website. It now complies with statutory requirements.

Inspection findings

- For this inspection, my first line of enquiry considered the steps that leaders were taking to ensure a high level of attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. You have taken effective action in this area. Leaders systematically check the attendance of these pupils and make contact with parents when concerns arise. As a consequence, the attendance rates of these pupils have increased considerably and are now broadly average. Levels of persistent absence have declined and are now well below average.
- During this inspection, I also focused on the support and provision received by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The work your leaders undertake to provide appropriate support for these pupils is commendable. Leaders have strong systems in place to monitor the progress made by these pupils and this information is shared effectively with parents. Leaders make appropriate links with external agencies and these are used successfully to support additional needs. Where pupils move to new schools, transition is smooth and effective. As a result of strong leadership in this area, the progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with, and sometimes higher than, that achieved by their peers. We did discuss that the school's website could be used more efficiently to support parents' access to information about special educational needs and/or disabilities. You dealt with the issue immediately.
- Finally, I looked at how leaders are challenging the most able pupils in reading at key stage 1. You have introduced a more structured approach to the teaching of

phonics. Leaders check the progress made by all groups of pupils. A typical comment from a parent was, 'The phonics that the school uses is a brilliant programme that has helped my eldest with his reading and spelling skills.' Inspection evidence supports the view that the teaching of phonics is very effective. As a result, pupils make rapid progress from their initial starting points, which are typically very low.

- You provide teachers and teaching assistants with a wide range of training opportunities to enhance pupils' reading skills. You stock your library area with a broad range of high-quality, challenging books. Posters to engage pupils in reading are well displayed. They link to reading for pleasure and the importance of having high aspirations. The carpeted area offers enticing places to sit with a book. Your library opens up to an outdoor learning space, which provides a further area for pupils to enjoy reading. All pupils are encouraged to take reading books home to read for pleasure. Display throughout school celebrates achievement through the medium of literature. As a result, pupils have grown in both confidence and resilience in their reading. They are making stronger progress this year and the proportion working at the higher level in key stage 1 is rising.
- You have used detailed assessment analysis to evaluate the level of challenge for the most able pupils. This process identifies pupils who need further support to reach the higher standards. However, on some occasions, the work planned for the most able pupils does not reflect an appropriate level of challenge. Your own evaluation has identified this issue. We agreed that subject leaders will need to check books and how teachers plan for challenge more closely across some year groups.
- Your teachers provide a wide range of additional experiences to enhance pupils' learning. This includes educational visits and opportunities for pupils to work with members of the local community. Classrooms are well resourced. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of equipment. This stimulates and challenges their thinking. As a result, pupils approach lessons with interest and understanding. They make good progress from their initial starting points.
- Subject leaders noted that the setting of homework, and the attendance at parent workshops, has not always been high. We agreed that leaders would explore ways in which they might enable parents to successfully support their children's learning at home.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the level of challenge for the most able pupils is consistently high, especially in English and mathematics lessons
- parents of pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are provided with further opportunities to support their children's learning at home

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

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, I met with you, your business manager and three members of the governing body. I spoke on the telephone with your school improvement adviser. I also met with the leader of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the pastoral leader/child protection manager. I spoke to a group of subject leaders who are responsible for mathematics, reading and writing. I also considered 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke informally with a small number of parents at the end of the school day. I met with a group of pupils and visited classes in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. I looked at examples of pupils' work and considered a range of documentation covering different aspects of the school's work. This included your record of checks on the suitability of staff, the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, assessment information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes from meetings of the governing body. I considered information posted on the school's website.