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4 December 2017

Mrs R Farnell-Hill
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Farnell-Hill

Short inspection of Pike Fold Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 November 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You became headteacher in September 2015 and have worked tirelessly to improve the school in every respect. You, your governors and staff work well together to create a school where pupils are happy, feel safe and enjoy their learning.

There have been some considerable changes since the last inspection. You were appointed as headteacher and you have changed the structure and personnel of the leadership team. There have been numerous staffing changes as the school has grown to take in two classes each year. The school has also moved to a new building. During this time of change and turbulence, you have maintained standards at the school and continued to improve the quality of education your pupils receive.

Your pupils are polite, respectful and very well behaved. They are positive ambassadors for your school. They wear their uniform with pride and follow the basic rules of 'ready, respectful and safe'. Parents say that their children arrive home chatty and excited about the fun activities they have done at school. The school's motto, 'Where stars sparkle', is seen in action in all areas of the school as pupils are engaged and enthused by their learning. You have created a bright, vibrant environment for pupils to learn in. The motivational quotations on walls, ranging from those of Nelson Mandela to 'The Princess and the Frog', remind pupils of the importance of learning and celebrate each pupil's uniqueness.

Governors, staff and parents are confident in your leadership and appreciate your open and welcoming approach. Parents are actively encouraged to engage with school

activities, for example through pumpkin-carving workshops, phonics support and regular coffee mornings. Parents appreciate the wealth of information they receive electronically about their child's progress and they praise teachers highly for the support and help their children receive. Staff are very proud to work at Pike Fold. They feel valued and respected and are supportive of the aims of the school. Your inclusive leadership ensures that the whole community works together towards a common goal of providing a 'safe, happy environment where children develop skills which enable them to make choices which will impact positively on their lives'.

Governors, senior leaders and staff have taken action to address the areas for improvement since the last inspection. At the previous inspection, inspectors identified the need to improve the systems used to track pupils' progress and attainment. In response, leaders have created a detailed and robust assessment system which ensures that they can accurately track pupils' progress and attainment. Class teachers use this information well to inform their planning. Leaders also use the assessment system to ensure that pupils make good progress across the curriculum. You now set challenging targets for pupils that are appropriate and based on their individual starting points.

Following the previous inspection, you also rightly focused on ensuring that governors receive regular, clear summaries of information so that they can ask you and your senior leaders searching questions about how well pupils are doing. Governors receive a wealth of information regarding all aspects of school life and visit the school regularly to ensure that they know the teachers and pupils well. Governance is strong at Pike Fold as governors support you while holding you firmly to account for the quality of education at the school. Governors have high ambitions for all pupils at the school and are proud of pupils and staff.

You acknowledge that although test results at the end of key stage 2 compare well with national averages, some pupils could make even better progress in reading and writing. As a result, you are determined to refine new ways of assessment as well as develop the curriculum and interventions to make sure that no one falls behind. You recognise that some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school regularly enough. We discussed the need to continue the drive by governors, leaders and staff to improve attendance for these pupils.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is a strength of the school, as is the culture of care and nurturing for all pupils and their families. Leaders are passionate about making sure that parents and families are supported well by the school. You have appointed a family engagement worker, who works closely with families to help them to access any support they need. The well-being and safety of pupils are your highest priority.

Leaders are thorough in making sure that pupils are safe. All safeguarding arrangements and recruitment procedures are fit for purpose. Staff have completed all the relevant and recent training so they know what to do if they have any concerns about pupils. You are 'Prevent' duty champions for the north and staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep pupils safe in this respect.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, particularly online. Some of your pupils have trained as e-cadets. They now teach their peers how to stay safe online, for instance

through ensuring safe and private profiles if using social media. Pupils trust staff in the school and feel comfortable discussing any problems or concerns they may have. You work with a wide range of agencies, such as the NSPCC, local authorities, the fire service, nurses and the local lollipop lady to teach pupils how to stay safe in the wider community.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, by the end of Year 2, pupils achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in 2017, attainment in mathematics and reading dipped to below the national average. Leaders are aware of the reasons for this slight drop in attainment and work is well under way to tackle this.
- Progress at the end of Year 6 was broadly average in reading and writing in both 2016 and 2017. Leaders have taken steps to improve this. From early years right up to Year 6, teachers use a wide range of strategies to encourage pupils to write. Purposeful tasks capture the interest of pupils and so, for example, when playing shops, younger children are motivated to write shopping lists.
- Across the school, the importance of reading is highlighted. Leaders have created new, comfortable areas for pupils to read and write in. Pupils enjoy working in these spaces and, as a result, are reading with enthusiasm and interest. The progress in reading of current pupils is good. This is a result of the strategies leaders have put in place to improve pupils' experiences of high-quality vocabulary and introduce a wide range of authors and genres.
- In 2016 and 2017, pupils' progress in mathematics improved rapidly to well above the national average. Pupils' work in mathematics is high quality.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is in line with that of their peers. This is because a proportion of the pupil premium funding is spent appropriately on effective interventions. Leaders have initiated strategies to monitor closely the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that teachers can address swiftly any underachievement. Leaders also use this funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are able to participate in the full range of opportunities to enrich learning, such as trips and visits.
- The school works hard to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders monitor attendance closely and where issues are identified, leaders deal with them quickly and effectively. In addition, you work closely with external agencies so that the appropriate support can be given. Consequently, the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is improving but leaders are aware that, overall, the attendance of this group is below the national average.
- The attendance of pupils who have an education, health and care plan has risen markedly this year as a direct result of leaders' work in this area. Leaders' thorough analysis of trends and close relationships with families have ensured that this group of pupils now attend school regularly.
- Pupils speak highly of the attendance rewards they achieve and are proud when their class wins points and certificates. Pupils enjoy being in school and do their best not to have time off. Leaders and governors work continuously with parents so that they realise the importance of their child not missing valuable learning time by taking term-

time holidays and unnecessary days off.

- Behaviour for learning is excellent. Pupils conduct themselves well around school, which is a calm and orderly environment. A very small number of parents expressed some concerns about behaviour via the parent questionnaire. However, all pupils and staff spoken with during the inspection stated that behaviour is very good in school, bullying is extremely rare, and that pupils at Pike Fold respect everyone, regardless of their differences. Pupils discussed how welcome new starters to school were made. Parents told the inspector how quickly their children had settled into school and were helped to feel part of the community from the outset.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- opportunities for high-quality reading and writing are embedded across the curriculum so that the rates of pupils' progress continue to increase
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen O'Neill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your senior leaders. In addition, I met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I met formally with a group of pupils from across the school and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons.

You accompanied me on visits to classes, where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance and the school's assessment data of pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised a range of policies and the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation report.

As part of the inspection, I considered the views expressed by parents in the 97 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. I also spoke with parents informally on the playground.

I took into account the 49 responses to a questionnaire for staff.