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Mrs Lyndsey Colman
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Colman

Short inspection of Scholar Green Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your energy and enthusiasm are infectious and permeate the school. You are reflective in the decisions you make and committed to providing opportunities and experiences that will enrich pupils' learning and broaden their horizons.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have tackled the areas identified effectively. You have successfully implemented a range of strategies for pupils to use before they ask their teachers for help. As a result, pupils' independence has improved. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. This is because learning activities closely match the needs and interests of the pupils. Pupils enjoy the challenges teachers provide for them to work cooperatively and to solve problems. Pupils spoken to said that they enjoy these challenges because they test what they can do.

You have worked hard to implement a curriculum that provides opportunities for pupils to develop and improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in writing and mathematics and in a range of other subjects, including history, geography and science. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and know what their next steps will be. Consequently, pupils' outcomes are typically in line with those seen nationally and are improving. There are an increasing proportion of pupils working at greater depth.

You have established a strong culture of professional dialogue, support and challenge among your staff. They appreciate the opportunities for professional development and are benefiting from sharing skills and knowledge with each other and with colleagues in other schools. This is particularly helpful for those who have recently taken on areas of additional responsibility in school.

The vast majority of parents spoken to during the inspection, and those who accessed Parent View online, commented extremely positively about the school. Information on how they can help their children with their learning and the homework they can do together is appreciated by a large number of parents. The phrase, 'It's like a family here at Scholar Green,' was heard several times. Parents also commented positively on the calm working atmosphere in school and the variety of clubs, visits and enrichment activities available for the pupils. Parents appreciate the care and support given by you and your staff, they know their children are safe, and they feel valued and listened to.

Pupils are polite, confident and proud of their own achievements and the achievements of others. The older pupils take their responsibilities seriously in their roles as buddies to the younger pupils, as members of the 'eco' and safeguarding committees and as councillors. One of the pupils who spoke to the inspector said, 'If you have ideas, the adults will listen to you. We may only have little bodies, but we have big minds.' Pupils feel valued and cared for and are confident that there is always someone they can talk to if they have any problems.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership of the school has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements, including online filtering arrangements, are fit for purpose. Safeguarding pupils is a high priority for you and your team. Staff and governors receive regular training and know what to do if they have any concerns. There is an effective and efficient system in place to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are identified quickly. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly online. They said that bullying is rare and behaviour is good. Parents and pupils feel that the school is a safe place to be. One of the pupils spoken to said, 'There is a safeguarding team and they help keep the whole school safe.'

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to attendance. You have been relentless in your drive to improve punctuality and attendance, particularly of disadvantaged pupils. You and your staff are very visible at the start and end of each day. There are a small number of pupils whose complex needs have resulted in their having considerable absence due to health-related issues. This is acknowledged by you, and you support the pupils and their families. Consequently, attendance is improving.
- You have introduced a number of imaginative incentives, including rewards, certificates and prizes that are having a positive impact on attendance. The

attendance of disadvantaged pupils has increased, and this is having a direct impact on improving progress and attainment for pupils. You work closely with the local attendance officer and support the most vulnerable families. Staff robustly follow up when pupils are absent, and you hold parents to account, especially when absences are due to holidays during term time. No pupils have been persistently absent this academic year. However, there are still a small proportion of pupils who do not always arrive promptly each day, and you are working hard with these families to improve punctuality.

- The second focus for the inspection was how you have developed the curriculum. As a result of the rigorous systems you have developed, subject leaders have a very clear understanding of strengths and key priorities. They ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills needed to teach an exciting curriculum that meets the needs and interests of pupils effectively.
- Pupils are proud of their progress and achievements. They enjoy opportunities to use their skills and to work together on challenging projects. They talk confidently about the resilience they have to solve problems. Work in pupils' books highlights how teachers build on pupils' prior learning with activities that ignite their interests. For example, in geography, pupils have used their research skills and mathematical knowledge to interpret graphs and charts accurately. They use the information to write detailed reports about mountains and geographical features. Parents spoke highly of the information and support they receive from you and your staff in order to support their children's learning, including the homework challenges that they do together.
- The displays in school capture and celebrate the opportunities that you and your staff provide for pupils. For example, you show photographs of pupils standing proudly with their own artwork, created with the 'eco' council, in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils dressed in World War II costumes as part of their work in history said that teachers bring learning to life. Another pupil spoken to said, 'We get to see the world on residential trips to France, and when we work outside in the forest school.' Pupils talked proudly about what it means to be part of the Scholar Green community and what fundamental British values mean for them. One pupil spoken to said, 'It's about respect for differences. It doesn't matter who you are, your religion, or the colour of your skin. You will be welcome here.'
- In 2016, you extended the provision in the early years to include a Nursery, which includes provision for a small number of two-year olds. I wanted to see how well they were being catered for, and the impact that having the Nursery as part of the school has on the progress made by children in Reception. Leaders in the early years have an in-depth understanding of how young children develop and learn. Staff receive regular training and meet the needs of the youngest children very effectively.
- The strong relationships you have with parents and carers contribute to how quickly the youngest children settle into well-established routines. The 'stay and play' session, a regular event, on the morning of the inspection was very well attended. Adults and children enjoyed the opportunity to build a rocket after listening to the story of 'Whatever next' by Jill Murphy. A parent spoken to said,

'It's a great opportunity to be part of my child's learning, and that's so important.' Children thrive in the warm and nurturing environment you have created. Consequently, children who attend the Nursery settle quickly into the Reception class. Your own assessment information highlights the improved rates of progress in language acquisition, phonics and early number skills for these children.

- Finally, we discussed how effectively the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used to diminish the difference in rates of progress and attainment, particularly by the end of key stage 2. You have diligently identified the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. This group incorporates the small proportion of pupils within the school who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Members of your leadership team work together and staff receive additional training to help them to effectively support pupils and meet their needs.
- Pupils have detailed individual profiles, developed with staff, parents and other professionals, which give precise 'next steps' to support pupils' progress. Support staff are skilled in using questions that challenge pupils' thinking and develop independence. Changes to the way you teach reading in Year 2 and Year 6 are having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' writing and the development of their linguistic skills and knowledge, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The school's own assessment information shows that the difference in attainment is diminishing. The school is successfully helping pupils to improve their rates of progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the rates of progress of disadvantaged pupils, so that a higher proportion of pupils are working at the national standard by the end of key stage 2
- they continue to improve the punctuality of a small number of pupils, so that they arrive on time at the start of each day and do not fall behind in the progress they make.

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

Yours sincerely

Amanda Stringer
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, other members of your leadership team and staff. I also met with the chair of governors and two members of the governing body. I conducted a learning walk with you and we visited classes where I had the opportunity to speak to pupils and see their work. I heard a number of pupils read. I met with a group of pupils during the day and spoke with a number of parents at the 'stay and play' session and in the school playground. I also took account of the free-text comments and 74 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents. I scrutinised your assessment information, your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices.