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Ms Patricia Hodge & Mr David Hunter
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Dear Ms Hodge

Short inspection of St Margaret's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2018 with Steve Bentham HMI, 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 December 2013.

This school continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection. Since then, the school has grown exponentially. Leaders have successfully brought together more than 600 pupils from every continent, speaking 48 languages, and from many different cultures into one happy community. As one parent told the inspectors, 'The school caters brilliantly for a diverse community and children of all backgrounds, races and religions. It does so with warmth and respect.'

Pupils leave this school at the end of key stage 2 achieving much better than their peers nationally. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and that of disadvantaged pupils is excellent. This is evidence that pupils' learning is central to leaders' and staff's actions.

Leaders' evaluation of how well the school is doing is honest. While standards at key stage 2 are most impressive, the areas needing further improvement have not been masked. Aspects of provision in the early years and key stage 1 are not as effective as those in key stage 2. There was nothing the inspectors identified that leaders did not know about. Leaders were able to discuss what actions had already taken place and what the impact of these had been. At times, the plans for what will happen are not specific enough.

At the time of the last inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise pupils' achievement. This has been most successful in key stage 2, where pupils make rapid progress and attain standards higher than the national average. Assessment systems are embedded and used well to

inform planning and timely support for those pupils who may be falling behind in their learning. Leaders have a notable knowledge of how well pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics and have used this to sustain improvements. This is not as well developed in other subjects but leaders are developing this aspect during the current academic year. Teachers are more skilled in regularly checking pupils' understanding in lessons and this can be seen in the progress that pupils are making over time. Pupils in this school continue to benefit from good teaching.

Governors share leaders' accurate knowledge of the school. The relationship between governors and leaders is transparent. This allows for constructive challenge and support. Governors are continually pushing forward with improvements and have a well-founded confidence in leaders' ability to deliver success. Governors have a sound vision for the school and this is reflected in their decision-making. Pupils come first and an excellent education is given where the needs of pupils are met. Governors are very conscious of the challenges the school faces as it continues to grow and are aware of having to build capacity within leadership at every level.

Safeguarding is effective.

Effective and frequent training, alongside strong induction programmes for new staff, foster a culture of vigilance among all adults. The single central record and checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are appropriate. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. This is because of the effective teaching and support that they receive. Leaders take swift action to address any concerns about pupils' safety. Inspectors did raise some concern about how easily accessible the school building was at the start of the day. This was quickly rectified during the inspection. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Inspection findings

- Leaders are currently reviewing the curriculum. They are clear they want a curriculum which provides pupils with memorable learning and prepares them for the future. While the opportunities to enrich the curriculum are many, leaders have not paid sufficient attention to deepening pupils' skills and understanding across the wide range of subjects.
- Attendance is improving and the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is reducing. Leaders work with parents and carers to help them understand the importance of attending school regularly. Parents increasingly appreciate that good attendance is essential to a successful journey throughout school and into adult life. Staff follow up any attendance concerns quickly and involve other agencies where necessary. Leaders have devised a number of strategies to engage parents in a positive way but leaders do take further action when required.
- Leaders' focus on assessment has been the backbone to improvements in the early years and key stage 1. Actions are in place to support children and pupils' learning. Leaders in key stage 1 are knowledgeable and has led staff to set higher expectations for pupils. This has resulted in improved standards in reading, writing

and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.

- The large number of pupils joining and leaving the school, many of whom are new to English, affects the standards reached in the early years, the Year 1 phonics check and at the end of key stage 1. The standards reached by those who join the school at the start of the Nursery or Reception Year are close to the national average.
- Currently, pupils are making good progress in the early years and key stage 1. The constant changes to leadership in the early years over recent years have delayed improvements. It is only now that the strengths seen elsewhere in the school are filtering down into these phases. New assessments are informing teaching, resulting in better progress for children. These assessments also inform more targeted support for children who need additional help. However, in both the early years and key stage 1, leaders' development plans do not always indicate specific actions or measurable targets for improvement.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to bring about improvements, especially in the early years and key stage 1, are more effective
- the review of the curriculum enables pupils to deepen their skills and understanding within the range of subjects offered.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this short inspection, inspectors met with senior leaders and members of the governing body. With senior leaders, inspectors conducted learning walks and had the opportunity to speak with pupils and see their work. Inspectors met with groups of pupils. There were nine responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents, but no responses to the pupil or staff questionnaires. Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other safeguarding procedures and practices. We also reviewed a wide range of documentation and held discussions about the curriculum, attendance, the early years and key stage 1.