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1 March 2018

Mrs W McCormack
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs McCormack

Short inspection of Lewis Street Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 February 2018, 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 July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You provide strong leadership and have steered the school successfully through a difficult time. Governors and staff support you and share your high aspirations for teaching and learning.

Leaders' work to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a key strength. Teaching assistants are highly effective because they are knowledgeable about pupils' academic and personal development and skilfully question to develop pupils' individual skills. Your school is fully inclusive and provision to meet the needs of a wide range of pupils is strong because you are passionate about meeting the needs of every individual.

Governors know the school and community well. They are knowledgeable about their school because they ask probing questions about its effectiveness. The local authority provides support at an appropriately 'light touch' level. The adviser knows the school's strengths and areas for development well. You have also commissioned extra support that is both challenging and effective. The high level of challenge from external partners

helps you to develop your plans with cohesion and purpose. This gives a strong direction to the school. You have also given senior leaders many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. As a result, there is a strong capacity for further improvement.

Pupils consistently display good manners. They are polite and keen to speak to visitors about their learning. Pupils told me that they enjoy school. One pupil's comment included, 'Our school has improved because both our headteachers make it better.'

The majority of parents who spoke to me at the start of the day and those who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, are supportive of the school. One comment summed up the many positive views of parents: 'An absolutely fantastic school. My child loves going into school and thinks the world of the teachers. I've found the teachers have always been open and approachable.'

At your last inspection, an area for improvement was to develop the role of middle leaders. They now play a much more important and successful part in the work of the school. They share their reviews of the school with staff, senior leaders, external colleagues and governors and help plan the next steps for improvement. Two other areas for improvement were to ensure that teachers challenged pupils sufficiently and that pupils improved the accuracy of their writing. Challenge is now evident in books for pupils of all abilities. Topic books are used to enable pupils to transfer English skills into other areas of the curriculum. This ensures consistency of next steps across English, history and geography. Work is matched to pupils' capabilities and learning is at the centre of school improvement.

During the inspection, we discussed the next steps required to enable the school to improve further. While pupils make strong progress across the early years, you accept that the recent strategies for improving communication and language should be further embedded to improve outcomes at the end of Reception.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements across the school, including in the early years, are fit for purpose. Safeguarding is at the core of the school's ethos and of its ways of working. Your staff receive regular training on how to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse. The governing body stresses the importance of safeguarding and keeps a careful overview of the school's work.

The school works well with a variety of external agencies to support any pupils who may need additional help. Pupils I spoke to feel safe at the school. They are taught ways in which to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet or mobile phones. Staff are very knowledgeable about pupils' families and ensure that they are provided with appropriate support when necessary.

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 at key stage 1. Teachers ask effective

questions and teach the pupils the appropriate vocabulary to enable them to explain their answers. Support for identified pupils and a greater focus on basic mathematics skills, spelling, handwriting and extended writing have a positive effect on the progress of current pupils. Interventions to support the high proportion of pupils who join the school throughout the school year to catch up with their peers are effective. As a result, these pupils make accelerated progress and do as well as others who have been at the school for a longer period. You have taken effective action to secure strong progress for most current pupils in Year 2. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and accurately. As a result, learning in lessons and work in books shows that pupils make strong progress from their starting points and an increasing majority make accelerated progress.

- The next key issue we agreed to consider was how leaders have improved outcomes in the early years. Leaders accurately identified that the key barrier to children's learning is language. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is considerably higher than the national average. Trained specialist staff support these pupils well. As a result, questioning is used effectively to encourage children to speak and listen, which expands children's learning and deepens their understanding. Disadvantaged pupils also make good progress from their typically low starting points. This strong progress is a result of bespoke activities and topics planned for children, including a widening of their life experiences. Although the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is improving, it remains below that expected for children of their age. We therefore discussed the need to ensure that the new strategies for improving communication and language are further embedded to improve outcomes in the early years.
- Another key issue that we agreed to look at was the attendance of pupils. Over the last three years, attendance was below national average. However, current information shows a more positive picture. Overall, attendance has risen and is now in line with the national average. Punctuality has also improved significantly due to closer monitoring in this area and to staff acting in a timely manner. You have identified the different reasons why some pupils have a high absence rate and are working closely with parents to improve their children's attendance. Your detailed records show that the vast majority of absences are for good reasons and are often linked to medical needs or genuine illness. You ensure that good attendance is celebrated and you are not afraid to challenge unauthorised absences when required. In order to ensure that pupils are fully supported, the school offers a range of services, such as extra interventions, to lessen the impact that persistent absence has on pupils' progress. The result is a clear improvement for targeted pupils.
- The last key issue we agreed to look at was how leaders are improving outcomes in phonics. There have been significant improvements in this area because of the effective actions of the subject leader. Changes to the organisation and delivery of the phonics sessions have brought about improvements. You regularly review and evaluate the impact of these changes. Observations and written work seen during the inspection showed that the pupils are using and applying their phonics skills effectively across a range of subjects. Other initiatives have been introduced across the school to help all pupils with their phonics skills and to develop their spelling later on in key stage 2. Leaders assess pupils who are learning to read every half term to check their knowledge and reading of words. As a result of these changes, pupils' progress in

phonics is strong and those pupils who need to catch up are making accelerated progress.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to further embed the new strategies for improving communication and language to improve outcomes in the early years.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Salford. 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 with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I met with you, your head of school, assistant headteachers, your English leader and the early years leaders 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 with parents at the start of the school day and considered 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered 14 responses to the online staff survey and 28 responses to the online pupils' survey.

I visited classes, along with your head of school and early years leader, 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.