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Ms Jill Da Costa
Headteacher
Irlam Endowed Primary School
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Dear Ms Da Costa

Short inspection of Irlam Endowed Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 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 February 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are pivotal in continuously improving Irlam Endowed. You have embedded a culture across the school which promotes pupils' academic aspirations alongside their personal development. Parents commented on your 'fabulous school ... with some amazing members of staff'.

You and your deputy headteacher have an accurate and reflective view of the school's strengths and priorities for development. You are determined to improve the school further and have high expectations of what you and your staff can achieve. Governors are well aware of all aspects of school life and know what needs to be done to make the school even better. You have created an exceptionally dedicated team of staff who share your vision for providing pupils with a good start in life. You and the governors ensure that the school motto of 'Fulfilling our Potential' extends both to pupils and to staff.

At the previous inspection in 2014, inspectors asked you to raise pupils' achievement in writing and reading by the end of Year 6. The deputy headteacher closely monitors the work that pupils are given to make sure it is sufficiently challenging to enable them to learn well and make good progress. She provides regular training and coaching opportunities in the teaching of phonics. This ensures that the minority of pupils at key stage 2 who are still struggling to fully understand and use phonics when reading and writing receive intensive support to enable them to quickly master this skill.

You have reviewed the training and deployment of teaching assistants so that they are no longer entirely class-based. Several have specialist skills in order to provide bespoke interventions for pupils who occasionally fall behind with their work. Senior leaders regularly check on the effectiveness of the work of teaching assistants and the impact that they are having on pupils' progress.

You and the senior leadership team ensure that all teachers provide good-quality feedback to pupils about their learning and how they might improve their work. Pupils have developed their skills in self- and peer-assessment so that they can reflect on and improve their work. You promote the sharing of best practice across the school and within your cluster of schools, which staff really appreciate.

Children get off to a good start in early years. The proportion of girls reaching a good level of development by the time that they leave Reception class was much higher than the national average in 2017. The proportion of boys reaching a good level of development was slightly lower than that of boys nationally. This is because a small number of boys in the specialist speech and language resource unit made less progress than their peers.

By the time that they leave your school, pupils reach standards that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. In 2017, the proportions reaching the expected standards in reading and writing were higher than the national averages, although slightly lower in mathematics. Leaders are addressing this and are also giving a high priority to increasing the proportions who reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

The vast majority of pupils, parents and carers speak very highly of your school. Parents comment on the 'safe, nurturing and positive environment' in which their children 'learn and grow in confidence'.

Safeguarding is effective.

In your role as the designated safeguarding leader, and together with your deputy designated safeguarding leader, you work tirelessly to ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. You make sure that staff fully understand their duty and follow systems and procedures for logging concerns. Together with the office manager, you ensure that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children. When I arrived at the start of the inspection, it was clear for me to see the effectiveness of procedures to check on those visiting school.

You ensure that the promotion of safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. You provide staff with training that is up to date so that they and members of the governing body understand the current guidance. You and the deputy designated safeguarding leader are prompt in making referrals to the local authority. Together, you rigorously follow up all concerns raised by staff and pupils. You make sure that pupils are kept safe from potential harm. You work with a range of external agencies to provide expertise to support pupils' welfare as and when necessary. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are

fit for purpose and records are detailed and of a high quality.

Inspection findings

- As part of this inspection, I investigated how effectively the provision in the early years is accelerating the progress of boys so that more reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. It was obvious from the start of the school day that staff help children in Nursery and Reception classes to settle very well into school routines. I observed how parents encouraged children in Nursery to write their names on their individual whiteboards as part of the registration process. Boys and girls alike did this with great care and accuracy and showed real pride in their ability to write their names. Staff in the early years plan the curriculum around children's interests and it was clear to see from their learning journeys how the topic on pirates had motivated both boys and girls. The early years manager has rightly identified that boys' communication and language skills are a priority for further development. Staff prompt discussion and role play opportunities around stories and boys and girls alike retell stories in their own words.
- Next, I explored the strategies that leaders and managers use to check on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics, particularly across key stage 2. Since the previous inspection, the mathematics leader has implemented a new whole-school approach to the teaching of mathematics. Leaders frequently check that teachers effectively plan activities for the range of abilities in their class using this new approach. Through observations of teaching and scrutiny of pupils' books, leaders are supporting teachers to focus more on challenging middle- and higher-ability pupils to develop their reasoning skills in order to reach the higher standards by the end of Year 6. Teachers are aware that they need to provide even more challenge for pupils through focused problem-solving activities and opportunities to prove verbally why an answer may be right or wrong. Leaders have arranged for teachers to benefit from working alongside a mathematics consultant, who provides training to develop teachers' planning.
- Finally, I looked at the opportunities pupils have to develop a love of learning across the wider curriculum. Pupils told me how much they enjoy all aspects of school life, and this is reflected in above average attendance and much lower than average persistent absence. Teachers plan learning opportunities which broaden pupils' horizons and raise pupils' aspirations. Year 5 pupils excitedly told me how much they were looking forward to developing their teamwork skills during the residential trip to an outdoor education centre later in the week. Year 6 pupils are looking forward to using their skills in speaking French when they spend several days in France later in the year. Teachers have also planned a visit to the Houses of Parliament for Year 4 in order to consolidate pupils' understanding of British values. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop an interest in the arts. For example, during the inspection, an art teacher from a local secondary school was working with Year 3 to explore the techniques used by Henri Rousseau. The teacher's enthusiasm inspired pupils to produce some high-quality artwork. A visiting musician teaches Year 4 pupils to play the violin, and older pupils told me that they have continued playing in upper key stage 2.

Staff go the extra mile in providing after-school extra-curricular activities, such as golf, horse riding, ice skating and many inter-school sporting competitions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff continue to improve the early years provision so that more boys reach a good level of development
- teachers help pupils to develop their problem-solving, reasoning and application skills in mathematics.

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

Naomi Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I observed teaching and learning alongside the headteacher. I held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, members of the governing body and the designated safeguarding leader. I analysed the 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and I spoke informally with parents at the school gates to seek their views. I also took account of 28 free-text responses from parents. I held a meeting with pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during breaks and in lessons. I took account of the 53 responses to the Ofsted pupils' survey. During the inspection, I reviewed a range of school documents. These included the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.