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Mrs Jane Rooney
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Dear Mrs Rooney

Short inspection of Statham Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 27 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 September 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The overwhelmingly positive comments from parents and carers are testament to the success with which you lead the school and bring its vision and aims alive. You are ably supported by a strong senior leadership team, enthusiastic teaching staff and an experienced board of governors. You lead the school with vision and imagination. Since becoming headteacher 18 months ago, you have established a culture in which other leaders, staff and pupils are empowered to lead and learn. The school's motto, 'Inspiring all to learn, share and care', is a clearly identifiable feature of its ethos. The same is true in relation to the culture of respect for diversity and equality, which prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.

When the school was last inspected, leaders were asked to ensure that the most able pupils were given work that got the best out of them. For the most part, this recommendation has been addressed well. Leaders ensure that from Reception to Year 6 the most able pupils are clearly identified and that opportunities to challenge them are built into every subject. You recognise, however, that there is still work to do to improve the achievement of the most able key stage 2 pupils in mathematics.

In 2013, inspectors also asked leaders to develop the role of subject leaders. You have made considerable improvement in relation to this recommendation. All subject leaders are now given time to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. They visit lessons, talk to pupils and review pupils' work and teachers' assessments. This allows these leaders to identify strengths and areas for

development, for which they are held accountable. This development has strengthened the school's capacity for further improvement.

Parents are highly complimentary about the quality of education your school provides. In their comments, parents referred to learning being inspirational, exciting and tailored to their children's individual needs. Pupils also spoke enthusiastically about their enjoyment of school. Pupils told me how much they like the project and investigative work that they undertake in many subjects. They spoke about how teachers use drama to help them explore ideas and sort out problems. Pupils also explained how proud they felt to have their writing and artwork exhibited in local festivals. Pupils particularly value being able to pursue aspects of work that capture their interest. In researching South America, for example, pupils who wanted to learn the Argentine tango were able to do so. All of this reflects well on your school's drive to develop pupils as independent thinkers and learners.

You have ensured that pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment compares favourably to national averages from the early years to the end of key stage 2. Despite this, results from national tests in 2017 indicated that the amount of progress that pupils in Year 6 had made in mathematics was below the national average. Furthermore, you are aware that disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils at the school and nationally. You explained your commitment to diminishing these differences, as well as increasing the amount of progress that pupils make in mathematics in key stage 2.

Throughout the school, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. You and your staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and these are well met. All of the parents who completed the online survey consider that pupils behave well and most of the pupils I spoke to told me the same. You ensure that the curriculum provides pupils with a positive and informed understanding of diversity and equalities. Pupils recognise the importance of respecting and valuing difference and they understand why prejudiced behaviour, such as racist and homophobic name-calling, is wrong. Pupils talked about the school's excellent response to some recent homophobic name-calling that had been picked up by a member of staff. Pupils say that they sometimes hear pupils use the word 'gay' inappropriately and occasional racist remarks. However, it was clear from my review of the school's detailed behaviour records that pupils are not reporting such incidents. You agreed that pupils should be reminded of the importance of sharing incidents of this nature with staff.

Governors are an experienced and committed team. They are proactive in undertaking training to ensure that they have the most up-to-date knowledge and skills needed for their roles. Governors are fervent in their expectations that every pupil should be stretched academically and equipped to deal with life's challenges. Governors ask probing questions to check that their expectations are being met and to support leaders in their efforts to improve the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a very strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Thorough checks are made to ensure that staff, governors and volunteers are suitable people to be around children. You ensure that staff receive regular safeguarding training and know exactly how to respond if they are concerned about a pupil's safety. Your records show that staff are vigilant in bringing any such matters to your attention. Record-keeping is meticulous and includes detailed information about communications with pupils' parents and professional agencies.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and trust the staff to keep them safe. As one pupil commented, 'If we have a problem, we can talk to any teacher.' You ensure that pupils are well educated about how to stay safe, including the dangers they might encounter when using the internet. Pupils have learned a good deal about the different forms that bullying can take and understand the difference between bullying and occasional incidents of misbehaviour. They say that bullying is rare, but if it happens teachers are good at dealing with it. Your detailed behaviour records confirm this to be the case.

Inspection findings

- Key stage 2 pupils' achievement in mathematics was a line of enquiry for the inspection. You explained that since September 2017 a new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been implemented. This is designed to ensure that challenge is built into every lesson, with opportunities to boost learning with additional challenges. In my discussions with pupils, a number said that mathematics was a favourite subject. However, the most able pupils also told me that they often find their mathematics work too easy. During my visits to mathematics lessons with your mathematics leader, this did not appear to be the case. The sample of books I reviewed confirmed that pupils have regular opportunities to learn mathematical facts and methods and to develop skills in reasoning and solving mathematical problems. You explained that the school's assessment information for current pupils is more positive than for the same period last year. This indicates that the new approach is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. You recognise, however, that more work is needed to embed the new teaching strategies further to ensure that they lead to consistently faster rates of progress over time.
- Another line of enquiry was the school's provision for disadvantaged pupils. Actions to ensure improvement in this aspect of the school's work are showing success. Teaching staff now have more precise information about the specific barriers to learning faced by pupils in their classes. They are supported in the strategies they use to help pupils overcome these barriers and are held accountable for the progress of these pupils. Pupils often receive extra help to accelerate their progress and help them reach personalised targets. Some, additionally, receive nurture and other provision to support their social and emotional development. The school's assessment information for current pupils shows that differences between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and others are diminishing. Nevertheless, these are yet to be demonstrated in the school's end-of-key-stage-2 test and assessment results.

- My final line of enquiry was about how well pupils achieve in subjects other than English and mathematics. Your successful work to strengthen the role of subject leaders has provided you and governors with quality information about pupils' achievements in the wider curriculum. Subject leaders are currently compiling portfolios to illustrate the breadth and depth of pupils' learning in their subjects, to enhance the information you already have from assessments of pupils' achievements in all subjects. Pupils' books and displays of their work reflect your intention that the curriculum provides relevant, exciting and stimulating experiences well. It is also clear that pupils have worthwhile opportunities to research information, present and evaluate their learning, and develop literacy skills across the curriculum further. Teachers pay significant attention to promoting the key vocabulary specific to each subject. This enables pupils to talk and write with confidence about their learning. Teachers challenge stereotypical ideas about the roles of men and women by ensuring that, when pupils learn about significant people, such as inventors, explorers and scientists, they are made aware of the contribution of notable women in these fields. Pupils' learning is enriched by visitors and thoughtfully planned educational visits, which broaden pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These have included visits to the opera and discussions with authors and sports personalities. A wide range of out-of-school activities further enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils make even stronger progress during key stage 2 so they reach higher standards by the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics
- by the end of key stage 2, differences in progress and attainment between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally diminish
- pupils recognise the importance of reporting incidents of racist or homophobic name-calling so that leaders can deal with these.

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

Yours sincerely

Margot D'Arcy
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your senior leadership team to discuss the school's evaluation of its work and priorities for improvement. I reviewed a range of school documents, including those relating to safeguarding and behaviour. I met with five governors

and a representative of the local authority. Accompanied by your mathematics leader, I observed learning and behaviour in mathematics lessons and reviewed a sample of pupils' mathematics workbooks. I considered displays of pupils' work around the school and a sample of their work from the wider curriculum. I held a formal discussion with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and spoke to others informally at lunchtime. I took account of 103 parental responses to Ofsted's online survey, including 33 written comments. I considered 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.