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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Miss Phillippa Wilson
Headteacher
Abbott Community Primary School
Livesey Street
Collyhurst
Manchester
Lancashire
M40 7PR

Dear Miss Wilson

Short inspection of Abbott Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 13 March 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. 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.

As a result of your very effective leadership, the school is in an even stronger position now than at the time of the last inspection. You are ably assisted in realising your clear vision for the school by your deputy headteacher and other leaders. Highly effective planning means that leaders take appropriate actions to enable pupils to achieve their potential. Leaders are very adept at evaluating the impact of their actions on pupils' progress.

Staff feel very supported and appreciated. The responses to the staff online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. The way that you genuinely value all of your staff is a distinguishing feature of this school. Within this very collaborative ethos that you have created, all staff want to do their best for the pupils. This means that pupils feel valued and happy in school. In this nurturing environment, pupils thrive and achieve well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They value the help that they receive from their teachers and support staff. They particularly enjoy the wide range of trips, events

and visiting speakers, which take place frequently within the curriculum. For example, on the day of the inspection, pupils were clearly enjoying the science workshop activities provided by an outside company.

You have made significant improvements to the way that pupils' progress is tracked from early years through to Year 6. The new system enables teachers and leaders to track accurately pupils' progress year on year. You ensure that this information is used effectively to inform the actions that are taken to help all pupils to achieve well.

This is a school that understands the difference that a high-quality education can make to children's lives from the moment that they enter the early years. You and governors have ensured that the leadership of this area is very strong. This means that children at Abbott Community Primary get off to a flying start as soon as they start their education.

At the last inspection, senior leaders were asked to make sure that teaching challenges the most able pupils so that they reach the high standards of which they are capable. Tracking information shows that the most able pupils currently in school are making strong progress, particularly in mathematics. However, ensuring that the most able pupils achieve the highest standards in reading and writing remains an ongoing focus for you.

At the time of the last inspection, the phase leaders were new to their roles. Consequently, senior leaders were asked to develop their skills in checking and improving the quality of teaching in their respective areas. There is no doubt at all that this has happened. You have made sure that the quality of middle leadership is now a clear strength of the school, which has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching across all phases.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong safeguarding culture permeates throughout the whole school. All of the pupils who spoke with me, and all those who responded to the online questionnaire, said that they feel safe when they are in school. They also said that they learn about how to keep safe, including online.

There is a very strong community ethos within the school. You and your staff know your pupils extremely well. Consequently, staff are well placed to spot any potential safeguarding issues. It is clear that you and staff go 'above and beyond' to support your pupils and their families.

You ensure that all staff receive appropriate training so that they are confident about noticing any signs of potential abuse or neglect and understand the correct procedures to follow should that be the case. All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including protocols and practices for record-keeping. Systems to ensure that only suitable people are recruited to work with children in the school are secure.

Inspection findings

- In the last three years, overall absence figures have been broadly in line with national averages. However, between 2016 and 2017, the persistent absence figure doubled from 5.8% to 10.8%. The cohort of pupils who did not attend school regularly during this time was made up predominantly of pupils who speak English as an additional language, those who have an education, health and care plan and those who are disadvantaged. Consequently, I was interested to find out the reasons for this and what you are doing to ensure that these groups of pupils now attend school regularly. You explained the individual contextual reasons why pupils in 2017 had a high rate of absence. For several pupils, this high rate of absence related to families having to return overseas to renew visas.
- Currently, a much smaller group of pupils are not attending school regularly. We discussed the specific reasons for this, for example because of serious medical conditions. The school's current persistent absence figure is now below the national average. I was very impressed by the personalised support that you and your staff are providing for these families. The work that you have done in this area has already had an impact. You provided evidence of six pupils whose attendance is now above 90%, having previously been regularly absent earlier in the year.
- In 2017, the published data showed that the most able pupils did not make good progress in reading and writing. Also, the proportion of pupils who reached the high standard in these areas was below the national average. A key line of enquiry for this inspection, therefore, was to investigate what leaders are now doing to ensure that the most able pupils make the best possible progress in reading and writing. The most able pupils have been a key focus in the school since this was identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection. The work that you have done in this area has had a significant impact in mathematics, where the most able pupils now achieve well. Your focus for this year has been to make sure that all teachers are creating challenging opportunities for deep learning in literacy. Current tracking information indicates that this is having a positive impact on the most able pupils' progress. However, we agreed that this remains a key priority area for you, particularly to ensure that this is happening consistently across the school.
- You have invested money in creating a delightful library for pupils. However, I was very disappointed that you did not envisage it being up and running until later in the year. This delay relates to what still needs to be done to ensure that pupils can borrow books securely through the computer system. During the inspection, we discussed the many benefits of pupils reading often and widely for pleasure. We spoke particularly of how important it is for schools like yours with a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils to have a range of attractive and high-quality books for them to take home and enjoy. You and governors assured me that you would make it a high priority to get the library up and running as soon as possible.
- My final line of enquiry related to how effectively the skills of middle leaders had been developed since the last inspection. Without a doubt, the quality of middle leadership is now very strong. Middle leaders speak very positively of the right balance that you strike between providing coaching and support for them while

at the same time trusting them to be innovative. The group of middle leaders with whom I spoke were extremely positive and enthusiastic. This is summed up in one comment: 'I look forward to coming to school every day.' Another leader who was appointed recently stated: 'Already I have learned so much. I have had so much development.' You have empowered them to lead their own areas very effectively. However, they understand that they must demonstrate the impact of their actions on pupils' progress. One middle leader explained how you have helped them to become 'reflective practitioners'. You and the deputy headteacher model highly effective leadership skills. Consequently, the quality of leadership throughout the school is very impressive. This is the main reason why the school is in an even stronger position now than when it was last inspected.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers are creating challenging learning opportunities in reading and writing so that the most able pupils continue to make strong progress in order to attain high standards
- the new library is up and running as soon as possible so that all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, have more opportunities to read for pleasure both in school and at home.

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

Yours sincerely

Anne Seneviratne
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher. I also met with four middle leaders, four members of the governing body, including the chair, and had a meeting with a representative of the local authority. I met formally with a group of pupils and talked informally with others in lessons and during morning break. I listened to pupils read. I also talked with parents and carers informally at the start of the school day. Accompanied by you, I observed teaching and learning across the school. Together with you and the deputy headteacher, I scrutinised the literacy work of a small group of pupils. I examined your self-evaluation document and improvement plans. I also undertook a review of the school's website. As part of the inspection, I considered the six free-text comments to Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and the eight responses to the one for pupils.