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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Gill Price
Headteacher
Weaver Primary School
Western Avenue
Nantwich
Cheshire
CW5 7AJ

Dear Mrs Price

Short inspection of Weaver 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 October 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You, the governors and deputy headteacher have created an inclusive and welcoming school. The school is a vibrant, colourful environment in which pupils learn and progress well. You focus on developing the 'whole child' and, as a result, the wider curriculum, physical education, extra-curricular opportunities and outside learning enrich the taught curriculum.

Pupils are happy and keen to learn. Pupils say that they enjoy their 'fun lessons' and are stretched by the 'mild, spicy and hot chilli' challenges they are given in class. Pupils are proud of their achievements outside the classroom also, particularly in sport. One commented, 'We may be a small school compared to others, but we are a school that punches above its weight.'

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and your leadership. They feel listened to and part of the 'Weaver family', and staff are very proud to work at Weaver. This is a testament to your caring and principled leadership.

You and the governors are keenly aware of the school's strengths and the areas which you need to develop further. You are aspirational for the school and its pupils. Governors are highly committed, passionate and know the school well. They hold you and your team firmly to account to ensure that leaders and teachers continue to deliver high-quality education to pupils. Leaders and governors work closely with your school improvement partner and the local authority who have been valuable in evaluating the school's work.

Governors and leaders have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Inspectors identified the need to continue to improve the quality of teaching to further accelerate pupils' progress. In response, you ensured that opportunities for staff training and sharing good practice are frequent and well planned. Staff work closely with local schools and moderate work to ensure that their assessments are accurate. You ensure high-quality teaching and learning by a thorough process of quality assurance, including lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and assessment information. The local authority representative and school improvement partner confirm the continuing improvements in teaching and learning across the school.

Following the previous inspection, you improved the level of challenge for pupils by introducing a common approach to stretching pupils in their work. Following an action research project into 'growth mindset' undertaken by a number of teachers, pupils are now taught how to select an appropriate level of challenge based on their prior knowledge. This enables pupils to feel empowered in their learning which has had a positive impact across the school in pupils' levels of perseverance, resilience and effort. Training for staff ensures that this approach is embedded across all year groups. Leaders have changed the rewards system to align with this development and leaders choose 'stars of the week' for their effort, resilience and attitude rather than achievement or ability.

At the last inspection, inspectors also identified the need to further develop the role of subject leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Middle leaders now lead quality assurance within their subjects and areas of responsibility. They ensure that high-quality teaching is evident throughout the school through regular lesson observations and work scrutinies, and by modelling good practice. Middle leaders also develop new initiatives across the school, such as developing a mastery approach in mathematics. Through support and bespoke training, you have built a team of strong, dedicated and talented middle leaders who drive developments in their subject areas and support you in ensuring that pupils at Weaver Primary receive a good standard of education across a broad range of subjects.

During the inspection, you acknowledged that strategies for monitoring pupils' progress across the wider curriculum need further development. You have appropriate plans in place to develop this in the near future. This should ensure that governors are able to hold subject leaders to account for the progress of pupils in all year groups and across the wider curriculum as firmly as they do in reading, writing and mathematics. You also acknowledged that embedding the stretch and challenge of pupils, based on their individual starting points, continues to be a key priority in helping pupils to reach their full potential. In addition to these improvements, continuing to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains a priority for school leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training and that those responsible for safeguarding and recruitment have appropriate and recent qualifications. All safeguarding records, documentation and procedures are now compliant and fit for purpose. Leaders work tirelessly to support

vulnerable pupils and staff are vigilant in all aspects of safeguarding.

Pupils feel safe in school and parents and staff agree. Pupils report that there are rarely any incidents of bullying and that, if they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Adults teach pupils how to stay safe online and how to make positive and healthy decisions. You work closely with a range of external agencies to promote the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves well emotionally and told the inspector how they can put a message into the 'worry monster's mouth' and then a teacher will talk to them to reassure them if they have any concerns.

Inspection findings

- At the beginning of this inspection, we considered a number of key lines of enquiry. The first of these looked at how effectively leaders are improving outcomes for key stage 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils across key stage 2 are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. Current data provided by leaders show that the majority of pupils in Year 6 are reaching the expected standard in mathematics, reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar. Teachers' assessments for writing indicate that pupils are making good progress but few pupils are currently on track to reach the higher standard. Leaders are aware of this and plans are in place to ensure that pupils are making progress more in line with that seen in reading and mathematics.
- Progress and attainment of pupils in other year groups are positive, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Strong leadership of the pupil premium funding ensures that pupils receive support and interventions to help them make good progress across the curriculum.
- The second line of enquiry considered the achievement of disadvantaged children in the early years. This was because in previous years too few disadvantaged children did as well as other children nationally in achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year. Information provided by the school shows that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is improving year on year, apart from in 2017. Individual case studies provided by leaders show that disadvantaged children have not reached a good level of development but they have made significant and positive progress relative to their individual starting points.
- Leaders of the early years and pupil premium funding work closely to support the progress of disadvantaged children in all aspects of their development. Every child has a unique action plan with personalised targets to help them make good progress and prepare them well for key stage 1. Governors track the progress of this group of children termly, and ensure that they challenge and support leaders to evidence the impact of their actions.
- A wide range of strategies are in place to support disadvantaged children in the early years, from social stories and comic strips to precision teaching and small-group work with a range of trained staff. Some children also benefit from therapeutic intervention time with 'Bisto', the therapy dog. Leaders also work closely with parents to reinforce the strategies being used in school so that learning continues at home. Significant

improvements in progress can be seen following these interventions and all disadvantaged children are on track to make good progress during their time in the early years.

- Another key line of enquiry looked at the attendance and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils. This was because, in 2016, attendance for this group of pupils was below that of pupils nationally, and this group of pupils were over three times more likely to be regularly absent from school.
- You have established effective systems to check pupils' attendance. You know the pupils and their families well and you are working closely with families and external agencies to help pupils overcome any barriers they face.
- When you have concerns about attendance, you take every possible action to provide support to the pupil and their family. Individual cases show that, as a result of your actions, the attendance of some of these pupils has improved considerably. Consequently, the attendance of this group of pupils is now improving quickly towards the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are regularly absent from school has fallen but is still higher than the national average. You recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that pupils attend school regularly, regardless of their circumstances. Changes in school systems to track persistent absence and attendance of groups of pupils more strategically are planned. This will enable governors and leaders to be aware of the improvements and issues regarding attendance of specific groups of pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- continue to maximise the challenge and high-quality provision for middle- and high-achieving pupils to enable a greater proportion of these pupils to reach the higher standards at the end of key stage 2
- further develop and embed new assessment and tracking systems, so that middle leaders, senior leaders and governors know how well groups of pupils are progressing, particularly across the wider curriculum
- build on recent improvements in pupils' attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, and ensure that the proportion of these pupils who are regularly absent from school continues to fall.

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

Yours sincerely

Helen O'Neill
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, senior leaders and middle leaders. In addition, I met with members of the governing body and a school improvement partner, and spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone. I met formally with a group of pupils from across the school and talked informally with others around the school and in lessons.

You accompanied me on visits to classes where we observed teaching and learning, spoke with pupils and looked at the work in some pupils' books. I examined a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leadership and management, and the school's assessment information related to pupils' progress and attainment. I also scrutinised a range of policies and the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation report. In addition, I undertook a review of the school's website.

As part of the inspection, I considered the views expressed by parents in the 73 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free-text facility on Parent View. I also spoke with parents informally in the playground. I took into account the 15 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.