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Mrs Linda Gibson
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Dear Mrs Gibson

Short inspection of Banks Road Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 April 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. None of the leaders, including you, were at the school at the time of that inspection. Since then, all but one teacher is new to post. Similarly, the vast majority of governors are recent appointments. These intervening years have seen considerable upheaval, and this has had an impact on pupils' outcomes. It has been your job to build a new team and put the school back on a firm footing. You have been steadfast in your commitment to the pupils and have made many necessary improvements.

You are supported conscientiously and skilfully by your deputy and assistant headteacher. They, like you, are making a positive difference. Upon your arrival, the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection had not been fully acted upon. Leaders acted with tenacity and determination to improve the quality of experiences for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. In a short period of time, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development increased significantly. Similar improvements were seen in the proportion of pupils being successful in the phonics check.

You have appointed most of the teaching staff. They are committed and enthusiastic. Given the trend of weaker outcomes at key stage 1, you focused on improving teaching and learning in the classes lower down the school. This has paid off. Teaching is most effective in key stage 1. This is evident from your own

assessment information and the work in pupils' books. Pupils' are more engaged and less reliant on their teachers in key stage 1 than in key stage 2.

Although the progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 2 in reading and writing is similar to the national average and in mathematics is well above, not enough pupils are reaching age-related expectations. For these pupils, the progress that they make needs to be even faster and more secure.

Leaders' evaluation and planning documentation do not accurately reflect the precision with which they know what still needs to be done. The evaluation is too limited to a celebration of strengths and the development plan is a list of what should ordinarily be happening. These documents do not do justice to what leaders have already done, are doing and intend to do. Leaders know their school very well and have demonstrated the capacity and effectiveness to make further changes. As a parent told me, 'I am excited about the difference that this school is making to my children.'

Governors have a breadth of skills and experience that they put to good effect. They provide leaders with strategic direction and give them the freedom to make it a reality. Governors frequently challenge leaders but are fulsome in their support to making sure that pupils receive the quality of education that they deserve. Governors' minutes reflect this. There is no doubt that governors are single minded in their focus on what makes a difference to pupils' experiences at school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have given safeguarding the highest priority. There is a large team that works well with parents and carers and other agencies to ensure that pupils feel safe and are safe. This effective culture is underpinned by policies and procedures that reflect statutory requirements. Adults are provided with the training that they need to ensure that they are alert to when pupils may be in need.

Inspection findings

- The most able pupils are starting to make better progress as a result of the improved quality of teaching. Teachers are challenging the pupils more and asking them questions to make them think. This challenge is most obvious in key stage 1. At times, pupils' writing skills in key stage 1 are more controlled and sophisticated than in key stage 2.
- Leaders have reviewed how pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This has focused the attention of adults on meeting the needs of these pupils in the most appropriate way. Interventions and support are timely, and evidence available at the time of the inspection indicates that these strategies are working. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have good attendance and are learning well.
- Pupils make the strongest progress in mathematics. This is because teachers are more confident in their teaching of this subject than in reading and writing. To improve this, leaders have provided teachers with the necessary training to

develop their confidence and skills. Governors have allocated funding for additional reading resources and strategies to improve the quality of writing across the school. As a result, the quality of learning in these subjects is improving across year groups.

- Attendance has improved, but the rates of pupils who are regularly absent from school remain high. Nonetheless, those responsible for attendance are untiring in their work to engage pupils and families. The actions that they take are speedy and considerate. There are a number of successful interventions which demonstrate what can be done when parents engage with the attendance officer and other external agencies.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- more pupils make the progress needed to reach age-related expectations
- the improvements seen in key stage 1 are implemented in key stage 2 to further raise standards, especially in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we visited classes to observe pupils' learning. I also took the opportunity to look at pupils' work. I had the opportunity to speak with a group of pupils about their work and school life and read the 57 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I spoke to some parents as they brought their children to school and considered the 45 responses to Parent View and other surveys that the school had conducted.

I held meetings with you and your deputy and assistant headteacher to discuss improvements in their areas of responsibility. I met with a group of governors, including the chair, and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I took into account the 18 responses to the staff survey.

I reviewed a range of documentation, which included your evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school development plan. I also looked at your own records of attendance, monitoring of teaching and learning, safeguarding records and training logs, and minutes of governing body meetings.