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14 May 2018

Mrs A Footman
Head of School
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Dear Mrs Footman

Short inspection of Stanley Grove Primary Academy

Following my visit to the school on 26 April 2018 with Stephen Rigby, Ofsted Inspector, 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 June 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You are passionate about supporting the pupils in your care and you told me that, 'We want the best for everyone and the best from everyone.' Your staff share this vision and work with you to ensure that pupils' well-being is at the forefront of all that they do. Your local governing body and executive principal work hard alongside you to support the school. They are aware of its strengths and also the areas where further development is required, most notably in the area of pupils' attainment.

Your executive principal noted that, 'Equality drives us all.' This was clear to see during the inspection, especially when I spoke to the pupils. They demonstrated a high respect for diversity and the rights of others. You also have the full support of parents and carers. Governors note with pride that, 'We are at the heart of the community.' This is evident in responses from parents. They have the greatest trust for all that you do and speak highly of leadership and teaching within school.

At the previous inspection, the inspectors highlighted pupils' positive relationships with staff. This strength has been maintained and was clear to see during the inspection. The pupils I spoke to hold the staff in very high regard. The previous inspectors also identified areas where further improvements should be made. Leaders were asked to improve writing outcomes, especially for the most able

pupils. This was to be done by providing more opportunities for pupils, especially the most able, to write at length across different subjects. Much work has been done in this area. There is now a clear structure for writing, which is reinforced throughout all year groups. You ensure that writing opportunities are embedded throughout the curriculum and pupils are given opportunities to write for real purposes. For example, pupils wrote about their love of writing. Their work was displayed in a local library and later taken to India to be displayed in Mumbai. In this way, pupils are being given opportunities to celebrate their writing skills. As a result of this focus, the progress that all pupils, including the most-able, make in writing is beginning to show signs of improvement. However, attainment at the expected and the higher levels in writing at the end of key stages 1 and 2 remains below that seen nationally for pupils, most notably the disadvantaged.

The previous inspectors also said that leaders must work closely with teachers to raise expectations in the way that pupils present their work. Much positive work has been undertaken in this area. Pupils are given guidance on how to present their work and this is reinforced by teachers. A new handwriting scheme has been introduced, following training for staff. This ensures that there is a consistent approach throughout school. As a consequence, improvements have been made, resulting in neater handwriting and well-organised work in pupils' books. Such improvements reflect the expectations set by leaders.

During the inspection, we considered areas where further work is required to support your school improvement. You are aware that the school's published performance information over time shows that, while progress is broadly in line with that seen nationally by the time pupils leave key stage 2, pupils' attainment at the expected and the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics is below that seen nationally. This is most notably the case for disadvantaged pupils. Additionally, we also agreed that further work is required to develop pupils' language and communication skills together with regular opportunities to develop their vocabulary in reading and across the wider curriculum. Finally, we agreed that there is a need to provide additional support and training for teachers and teaching assistants. This is to ensure that they address effectively curriculum initiatives introduced by leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and other staff are aware of the need to be vigilant about safeguarding. The school site is secure and the identity of visitors is checked thoroughly on entry to the school building. Information is provided about safeguarding procedures, including fire safety arrangements.

Leaders have effective systems to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are kept safe and that they receive additional help from outside agencies where this is required. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. One pupil, reflecting the views of many, noted, 'Teachers in school keep us safe from any dangers.' Pupils also have a clear understanding of their role in keeping themselves safe both online and in the 'real' world. The work that leaders are undertaking around rights and respect is

having a very positive effect on the way in which pupils treat and support each other. This was evident during the inspection in the way in which pupils supported and encouraged each other during a pupil meeting with the inspector.

Inspection findings

- At the start of this inspection, I shared with you a number of lines of enquiry. The first concerned ways in which leaders ensure that children make good progress towards the early learning goals and move smoothly into key stage 1. While leaders are working on improving the transition into Nursery, they have created effective transition arrangements to prepare children for Year 1. The environment, learning activities and resources ensure that children make good progress. The quality of assessment is thorough and enables teachers to effectively monitor children's steps through the early learning goals. As a consequence, the number of children who are achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is increasing.
- We also examined leaders' efforts to ensure that pupils make rapid progress in their reading skills throughout school. You are aware that, while pupils' progress is broadly in line with the national average in reading by the end of key stage 2, their attainment at both the expected and the higher levels is below that seen nationally in the end of key stage 2 published information over time. To address this issue, leaders have implemented a range of changes to teaching. Phonics is now taught at the beginning of the Reception Year, with work also being undertaken for those children who attend your Nursery. This has helped to develop children's reading skills from an earlier age. However, we agreed that further work could be done to ensure that the teaching of phonics actively engages children in their learning.
- In key stage 2 you are giving more attention to developing pupils' comprehension skills. This is showing signs of success. Your school's most recent published information for reading at key stage 2 shows early signs of improved attainment, most notably for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders are also working to improve the profile of reading in school. They are aware that some pupils do not have access to a wide range of books at home. To overcome this you are providing a broad range of opportunities to engage pupils in reading through activities, such as book fairs and visits to libraries. Many of these events encourage work with parents and the local community. This gives pupils the opportunity to develop a love of books beyond school. However, while the school does have a well-stocked library, the range of books held within classrooms is not always broad enough to capture pupils' enthusiasm.
- You have correctly identified that pupils' language and communication skills require further development and you are aware that this hampers their performance in reading and writing. As a result, some members of staff have received training to develop pupils' language skills. However, you recognise that further training is required to ensure that all staff are skilled in developing pupils' language and communication. This was highlighted during the inspection, where opportunities were missed during lessons to develop further pupils' language and vocabulary skills. As a consequence, pupils' oral ability is not always strong,

especially in key stage 1.

- The next area we examined was how effectively staff are supporting the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have recently introduced a new assessment and tracking system. This enables them to closely track the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers are now using assessment information to provide work which is more closely aligned to the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Teachers use assessment together with pupil premium funding to ensure that additional support is provided for pupils. As a result, the gaps between them and other pupils is narrowing. The attainment of this group is showing some signs of improvement. However, further time is required to embed these new systems to ensure that improvement continues at the end of both key stages 1 and 2 and attainment reflects more closely the standards seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have, over time, provided teachers and teaching assistants with training opportunities linked to curriculum development. However, as new initiatives are introduced into school, there is now a need for additional ongoing training and support. This is to ensure that teachers and teaching assistants have a more consistent and clear understanding of new approaches to teaching and provide all groups of pupils with the challenge that they need to achieve. For example, you have introduced a new strategy for teaching mathematics which will give pupils the opportunity to take part in increased levels of problem-solving and mastery activities. However, inspection activities highlighted that the approach to this style of teaching was inconsistent in key stage 2, resulting in pupils' learning being slowed down and a lack of pupil attention evident in some lessons.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they work closely with teachers to ensure that attainment is raised for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2
- they embed curriculum development through high-quality training and focused, ongoing support for teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that appropriate levels of challenge are provided for all groups of pupils
- pupils' develop a rich vocabulary through:
 - regular and easy access in school to high-quality fiction and non-fiction texts
 - promoting language across the curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Manchester. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Gill Pritchard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the executive principal and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust. Inspectors also met with the assistant headteachers, subject leaders and members of the local governing body, including the chair of the governing body. We discussed the actions the school has taken since the last inspection. Inspectors visited classrooms to observe pupils at work. They also met informally with parents and groups of pupils to gain their views of the school and listen to them read. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school. They evaluated your school improvement plan, your evaluation of the school's effectiveness, and other evidence, including information provided to governors relating to staff appraisal. Inspectors also examined pupils' books and took account of the seven responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 32 responses from the staff survey and 30 responses from the pupil survey.