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Mr Simon Buxton-Moore
Headteacher
Hamer Community Primary School
Albert Royds Street
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Dear Mr Buxton-Moore

Short inspection of Hamer Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 May 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 your 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 lead a welcoming, harmonious and inclusive school where staff are highly committed to making a difference to pupils' lives. You give pupils many opportunities to develop their skills across the curriculum and to contribute to the whole community. Staff are aspirational for pupils and teach them to live up to the school's values, including motivation, ambition, respect and perseverance.

You have strengthened leadership at all levels. The whole staff are involved in the development of the curriculum and share responsibility for raising standards. You give staff just the right support, training and opportunities to bring about improvements. For example, recent changes to the school's behaviour policy have had a positive impact. Staff provide a calm learning environment for pupils. Effective leadership has also improved attendance for most pupils.

You lead a dedicated team of staff who are proud to be members of the school community and share your vision to achieve the best for each and every pupil. Staff appreciate the frequent opportunities that you give them to attend training, to work collaboratively in school and with other settings. As a result of well-planned training, you have improved the quality of teaching and standards have improved. From their typically low starting points, pupils make good progress through each key stage. You agree that there is still more to do to improve the progress of some pupils in reading by the end of key stage 2.

Your skilled, enthusiastic and hard-working governors share your ambitions for the school. Governors know the school very well and keep a careful watch on how pupils achieve, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/ or disabilities. Through regular training, governors keep their skills up to date. They visit the school often and provide just the right balance of challenge and support for leaders.

Your polite and welcoming pupils enjoy coming to school. In lessons, they are keen to do their best and to achieve well. Around school, pupils are well-behaved. Pupils told me that they feel very safe and that bullying is very rare. Pupils relish opportunities you give them to support others. For example, in 'Maths Happiness Month', pupils used their enterprising ideas to work in the local community and raise funds for charity, using their mathematics skills to make others happy. In lessons, pupils support each other in their learning, including working as 'Maths Ambassadors' and 'Reading Partners'.

Parents and carers share pupils' positive view of the school. They were keen to tell me how inclusive the school is and how well staff support their children, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Parents appreciate senior leaders being out on the playground every morning to greet families as they arrive.

Since the last inspection, you have demonstrated the ability and determination to improve teaching and learning. Pupils' achievements in mathematics have improved, including the most able. This is because teachers plan work which develops pupils' fluency in number, including written calculations. Staff challenge pupils, giving them plenty of opportunities for problem solving and reasoning in their work. Leaders check carefully to make sure that pupils are making the progress that they should in mathematics. We agreed that more opportunities could be provided to improve writing in the early years.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, staff and governors place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. Leaders have made sure that safeguarding arrangements are of high quality and effective. You provide appropriate and frequent training. Leaders hold regular safeguarding briefings for staff to keep them alert and attentive. As a result, all staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding. You keep meticulous records in relation to safeguarding and staff work closely with other agencies. Leaders use the school's website to give parents useful information about online safety. You ensure that the curriculum is filled with opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the wider community.

Leaders have made sure that statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children. Governors check that the appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection. You have taken effective actions to make sure that the school is a safe and secure place for children.

Inspection findings

- The inspection focused on a number of key lines of enquiry, the first of which related to attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is in line with the national average. However, persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils was higher than that of other pupils nationally in 2016 and 2017. Leaders check the attendance of pupils regularly and rigorously follow up absences with parents. You have introduced a range of initiatives to encourage pupils to come to school. Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully, including to improve their attendance. The impact of measures that you have put in place is that the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils has increased. However, you recognise that the attendance of this group of pupils still needs to improve.
- The second focus for the inspection related to pupils' achievements in reading in key stage 2. This was because, in 2017, pupils at the end of Year 6 had attained well in mathematics and writing. However, their achievements in reading were below national averages. Leaders have wasted no time in improving how staff teach reading. You have made sure that teachers have received training and you have improved reading resources. Through your 'Reading Destinations' initiative, pupils have been enthused to read frequently and for pleasure. Pupils told me how excited they are to earn new and engaging books for their classroom libraries to reward them for their reading. In lessons, teachers have a sharp focus on improving pupils' reading skills, such as inference and scanning. Pupils read with confidence and understanding. Leaders' regular checks on teaching show that there are some inconsistencies in teaching reading at key stage 2. In some classes, teachers give pupils tasks which do not precisely match their abilities. This is because recent changes have yet to be embedded.
- I also looked at how well children learn in the early years. The indoor and outdoor classroom areas are bright and engaging. Staff plan interesting activities which match children's interests and develop their skills. Plenty of speaking and listening opportunities support children who speak English as an additional language. During the inspection, children were enjoying working together to build a wall in the outdoor construction area. Indoors, other children were carefully mixing colours to paint with care and concentration. Across Nursery and Reception, children play with cooperation and enjoyment. Staff ask the right questions to develop children's thinking and enhance children's learning. Children make good progress in different areas of learning from their varied starting points. However, their progress is not as strong in writing. We agree that staff could enhance opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills, including in the outdoor area.
- During the inspection, I found that the school provides a nurturing and inclusive environment which allows pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to thrive. Your close links with the neighbouring special school enhance provision for pupils, giving them access to additional resources. Teachers identify pupils' barriers to learning very accurately and teaching precisely matches their needs. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in subjects, including English and mathematics.

- You teach pupils to respect people with different genders, sexualities, ethnicities and disabilities. Through a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils learn to be thoughtful and show empathy for others. The pupils that I spoke to had good knowledge of other religions, including Christianity and Judaism. Pupil 'British Values Ambassadors' work in partnership with local schools, services and industry to raise awareness and appreciation of diversity.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves further
- recent improvements to teaching reading are embedded so that more pupils attain the expected and higher standards in key stage 2 and make the progress of which they are capable
- staff enhance activities to support children's early writing skills in the Nursery and Reception Year, including in the outdoor area.

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

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Stevens
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, senior and middle leaders, and teachers. I also spoke to eight governors. I talked to a representative of the local authority. I met with seven pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 and spoke informally with other pupils during lessons. I visited classes with you, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke with pupils. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.

I took account of two free-text responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. I also met with parents before school. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and pupils' behaviour logs. I evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep pupils safe, staff training records, safeguarding checks and attendance information. I undertook a review of the school's website.