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Mrs Caroline Walker  
Headteacher  
Parkside GGI Academy  
Greengate Street  
Barrow-in-Furness  
Cumbria  
LA13 9BY

Dear Mrs Walker

### **Short inspection of Parkside GGI Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 26 June 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in November 2011.

### **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 specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You are an inspirational headteacher who leads by example in your many and varied roles. These include being a local leader in education and providing effective support for other schools. You and your assistant headteacher ensure that staff morale is extremely high, by valuing all that staff do and making sure that everyone works together as 'Team GGI'. You set challenging targets to enable pupils and staff alike to reach their full potential. You state on your website that you aim to 'nurture, develop and inspire children', and you certainly do.

You, your assistant headteacher and governors have an accurate and reflective view of the school's strengths and priorities. The school improvement plan includes precise actions to make sure that all pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and for life generally.

The quality of teaching over time is consistently good and, in some aspects, even better than this. Teachers provide bespoke challenges for individual pupils and records of pupils' progress are accurate and detailed. The impact of this has led to a rise in the achievement of all groups of pupils as they move through the school. You

place a high priority on training to keep your staff up to date on all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. You ensure that there are many opportunities to share best practice, both across and beyond the school. You have provided opportunities for your staff to develop expertise in several aspects of education. As a result, four teachers are specialist leaders in education, and they work with your own staff as well as teachers in other schools to improve practice.

You and the staff ensure that children get off to a good start in early years. Many children enter the school with levels of development that are below those typical for their age. This is particularly the case in speech and language, and in personal development and social skills. Despite this, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been above the national average for the last two years. Parents and carers commented that 'children with huge speech delay come on in leaps and bounds', and they certainly do.

The proportion of pupils reaching expected standards by the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than the national average in 2016 and 2017. Similarly, those reaching greater depth in each of these subjects was also above the national average. You and your staff are preparing well for expanding the school intake to include Year 3 pupils from September and the remaining key stage 2 year groups in subsequent years.

Pupils clearly enjoy and thrive on school life. Two-year-old children quickly build positive relationships with each other, the older pupils and with you and your staff. This helps children settle quickly into school life. Pupils throughout the school are courteous towards each other and the adults around them. Pupils are keen to learn new things, and their behaviour, both in class and during breaks, is exceptional. All parents who responded to Parent View and to whom I spoke during the inspection would recommend this school. They told me that you and your staff provide their children with 'opportunities to develop personally, socially, mentally and academically'. They commented on the fact that you and your staff are '100% committed to making sure that you develop every bit of potential from every child'.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

As the designated safeguarding leader, and together with the two deputy designated safeguarding leaders, you ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. You make sure that staff fully understand their duty and follow systems and procedures for recording concerns. You ensure that all necessary checks are made on the suitability of staff to work with children. When I arrived at the start of the inspection, the effectiveness of procedures to check on those visiting school was clear for me to see.

You make sure that the promotion of safeguarding throughout the school has a high profile. You provide staff with regular training that is up to date, so that they and members of the governing body understand the current guidance. One of your deputy designated safeguarding leaders holds monthly meetings with kitchen staff

and lunchtime supervisors to reinforce training and discuss potential safeguarding scenarios. You and the deputy designated safeguarding leaders are prompt in making referrals to the appropriate authorities. Together, you diligently follow up all concerns and make sure that pupils are kept safe. You work well with a range of external agencies to secure expertise to support pupils' welfare, as and when necessary. You and your staff provide exceptional care and support for pupils and their families. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality.

## **Inspection findings**

- As part of this inspection, I looked at how effectively leaders and managers, including governors, use the pupil premium funding to support the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils. You and governors ensure that funding is well used for both academic support and support for the social and emotional well-being of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the progress of disadvantaged pupils', including those of higher ability, is now much closer to that of other pupils nationally. Examples of pupil premium spending include subsidising the costs of school trips and curriculum enhancements. These experiences broaden pupils' horizons, take them beyond their local community and bring learning to life. For example, teachers use outdoor pursuits to build pupils' resilience and draw on these experiences when back in the classroom.
- You ensure that the curriculum offers an extensive range of learning experiences including visits to outdoor-education centres, towns, cities and the beach. From the age of just two years, children are encouraged to become inquisitive in the early years classroom areas and engage in role play in a wide range of outdoor activities. You and your early years staff ignite children's imaginations in a highly stimulating environment, which has been enhanced by the secret garden area. You and subject leaders ensure that all aspects of the early years and key stage 1 curriculum are covered, and there is an appropriate balance between subjects. Teachers ensure that topics are used well to link subjects together and bring learning to life. A raft of extra-curricular activities includes choir, gymnastics and dance. A highly skilled specialist sports coach also provides an extensive range of sporting opportunities. You, your staff and colleagues from local industry motivate pupils, and this is appreciated by parents who said that you 'make it a fun place to learn'. Older pupils told me their aspirations to gain employment in a range of professions, such as becoming a pilot, vet, teacher or engineer. You are preparing well for the new Year 3 pupils as you embark on expanding the school over the next few years to include key stage 2. The planning and review of the new key stage will need to continue as new year groups join the school.
- Next, I explored the high rates of absence of girls in 2016 and what you are doing to promote high levels of attendance. You provided me with evidence of strong analysis of the information on absences and action taken to improve attendance. Your inclusion manager follows up in detail those pupils who are late, occasionally absent or persistently absent. Parents praise the use of attendance plans, which have proved successful in improving the attendance of several pupils. Staff also provide a breakfast club, which has significantly helped improve punctuality for several children. Pupils encourage each other to attend

regularly, as they are highly motivated to win the weekly best class attendance and have Parky Bear visit their class. The vast majority of pupils attend regularly, and this supports progress with their learning.

- Finally, I looked at how you are working with parents and the wider family to encourage learning beyond school. Staff work with parents of the youngest children who have just started school to develop parenting skills. You and your staff also provide a raft of opportunities to help parents to bond with their children and find ways beyond the school environment to maximise learning opportunities. Parents told me that they particularly enjoy the weekly internet challenges. They think they are 'a great idea to promote special time with the family'. These challenges range from turning the television off for an evening and playing a board game together, to parents writing letters to their child about why they love them. Staff encourage parents to attend phonics sessions, which parents describe as 'invaluable'. Teachers reinforce the importance of parents and their children reading together at home. There is evidence of this in reading logs, but a minority of parents do not engage with this and this slows pupils' progress. Parents are eager to attend the 'work of the month' assemblies where they can see what children across the school have been learning. Staff go the extra mile to build highly positive relationships with parents and the wider family.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff continue to encourage parents to make time to listen to children reading at home
- they continue to develop and review the key stage 2 curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Naomi Taylor  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, we jointly observed teaching and learning. I held meetings with subject leaders, senior leaders, members of the local governing body and with you as the designated safeguarding leader. I analysed 25 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and I spoke informally with parents at the school gates to seek their views. I also took account of 23 free-text responses from parents. I analysed the 31 staff responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and spoke

to several staff informally during the day. I held a meeting with pupils and spoke informally with pupils during breaks and in lessons. During the inspection, I reviewed a range of school documents. These included: the school's development plans and self-evaluation documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; safeguarding documentation; records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance; the school website; school policies; pupils' work and their reading logs.