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Mr Mark Rodgers
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Rodgers

Short inspection of Grange Moor Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 14 May 2019, 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 April 2015.

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.**

Leaders have created a safe and happy place for children to learn. Parents and pupils like the 'family feel' and say that everyone looks after each other. Staff who responded to the survey all said that they were proud to work at Grange Moor.

Parents who spoke to me or completed Ofsted's questionnaire are fully supportive of the school. They say that their children are happy and safe at school. They also told me how they appreciate the efforts of leaders and staff to create opportunities for additional sporting events and activities. As one parent noted, 'Over the years, I have witnessed the hard work that all the staff do and the time they give up to provide an amazing life experience for mine and all the other children.'

At the last inspection, you were asked to improve the quality of teaching and learning by taking more opportunities to allow pupils to work things out by themselves before providing further support and by making sure lessons have a sense of urgency. You have put in place whole-school 'non-negotiables' to support teachers and pupils with this. You have been involved in a project to provide training for staff to improve on this. I saw good opportunities for pupils to work independently in lessons.

Leaders are aware of the school's strengths, such as the teaching of mathematics. However, the school's weaknesses have not been accurately identified over time. School improvement plans are in place, but they do not address the areas that most need improvement, which are the teaching of, and pupils' outcomes in, reading and phonics. Leaders have not checked the school's work in this area effectively enough.

Pupils behave well in school. They are friendly and welcoming towards visitors. When I spoke to pupils, they told me how they all look after each other. On the playground, pupils have a range of activities to take part in. They play well together in a calm and purposeful way.

Governors are proud of the experiences offered by the school's broad and balanced curriculum. They recognise the strength in the warm ethos of the school and all the additional activities which are given to pupils, such as outdoor learning, trips and residential visits. However, governors have not probed deeply enough into the weaknesses in pupils' outcomes in phonics. They have attributed low outcomes to small cohort sizes rather than exploring where improvement is needed in teaching and learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders have ensured that all the necessary checks have been undertaken on staff. Where concerns arise, leaders act swiftly to ensure that the right actions are in place to keep pupils safe.

Leaders make sure that staff receive regular and up-to-date training on how to keep pupils safe and how to identify any signs that pupils may be at risk. Leaders keep training records up to date. Pupils feel safe in school. They say that bullying rarely happens and, when it does, teachers are good at resolving things. Parents feel that pupils are safe in school. One parent said, 'I am very happy as a parent to send my child to a school that cares so much about her.'

Inspection findings

- In recent years, published information of pupils' outcomes in reading at the end of each key stage has not been good. In 2017 and 2018 for example, a below-average proportion of children left the early years with the reading skills they need for learning in key stage 1. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was very low. Although this improved considerably in 2018, the proportion remained below average. In 2018, standards of attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 fell considerably from those in 2017 and were well below average. In 2016 and 2017, through key stage 2, pupils' progress in reading was in the bottom 20% of schools nationally and lagged behind that in writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress through key stage 2 in reading improved in 2018, and standards were above average. However, published data indicates that this still did not represent good progress from their previous starting points. During this inspection,

therefore, I focused on looking at the quality of teaching of reading across the school, including in phonics, and how well current pupils are achieving as a result.

- Teaching of phonics is not consistently good. Teachers plan engaging tasks for pupils in lessons, however these tasks do not always meet pupils' varying needs and abilities. Too often, staff do not pronounce letter sounds correctly or use the letter names to help pupils to spell. As a result, pupils cannot apply the sounds they have learned to their own writing. The books pupils are given to read do not always match their reading ability. Some pupils are unable to recognise the sounds within the words. This hinders their ability to understand what they read. Making sure that all adults receive training in phonics so that teaching and learning are consistently good is an urgent next step.
- In key stage 2, pupils' rates of progress vary between subjects. Pupils are making better progress in writing than they are in reading. The recent focus on improving pupils' writing, and handwriting, is having a noticeably positive impact on pupils' writing skills. Further work is needed, however, to improve pupils' progress in reading. The teaching of reading through key stage 2 is inconsistent. Leaders' and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and, as a result, pupils do not reach the standards they are capable of. Too few reach or exceed the expected standards of attainment.
- Given the weaknesses in pupils' achievement across the school in reading and phonics over time, I also wanted to look at how well leaders and governors are improving the school. You have recently engaged the support of the local authority. It is now working with you to help bring about the improvements needed. However, it is early days. There is much still to be done to make sure that the quality of teaching in reading is good and this is reflected in pupils' outcomes. Leaders' and governors' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are not yet effective in shaping and evaluating your school improvement actions, and this requires further work.
- Finally, I wanted to look at pupils' attendance. This is because, since the last inspection, attendance rates have declined and also, in 2017 and 2018, an above average proportion of pupils were persistently absent. Leaders have worked closely and effectively with the local authority to improve attendance. Together, you have significantly reduced the number of pupils who are regularly absent.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- as a matter of urgency, all adults receive training in phonics so that teaching and learning are consistently good
- all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading and phonics and that all pupils are set challenging work that reflects their varying needs and abilities
- pupils are supported effectively in applying the sounds they have learned to their reading and writing

- they check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress more thoroughly, and use this to shape school improvement plans and to evaluate the impact of their actions.

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

Yours sincerely

Eleanore Pickard
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, phase leaders, your designated senior leader for child protection with the safeguarding team, governors and a representative from the local authority. Along with you, I visited classes. I looked at current pupils' books in different year groups with the subject leader and with the early years leader. I spoke to parents and pupils on the playground and I listened to four pupils read. I examined a range of documentation with you, including documents relating to staff recruitment, attendance, governance and safeguarding. I took account of the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan. I reviewed the school's website. I considered the 47 responses from parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including 15 free text responses, 17 responses to the staff survey and 38 responses to the pupil survey.