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Ms Amanda Gregory
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Dear Mrs Gregory

Short inspection of Harris Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 18 January 2017, 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 January 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your passion for your school is obvious. The school plays a pivotal role in the community and is highly valued by staff, parents and pupils alike.

The school motto of 'aim higher' is lived out each day and you are constantly looking to improve. You quite rightly recognised that a dip in performance in 2016 was not acceptable and quickly put plans in place to improve pupils' achievement, particularly in reading. Current data indicates that pupils are now making better progress in reading.

Since the last inspection, you have improved the quality of teaching in writing considerably. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given opportunities to write at length in a variety of ways. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2016 was high. In addition, there has been a marked improvement in pupils' handwriting.

The leadership team in school has changed considerably since the previous inspection. Some leaders are new to their roles and they are enthusiastic about the opportunities they have been given. They are beginning to identify actions to further improve the school, but they are not always clear how to measure the impact of this work.

Some governors are also new to their roles. Governors have a wide range of skills and experience; they are determined to make the school the best it can be. Governors challenge you with timely and probing questions and understand that to be even more effective they need to hold leaders closely to account for the progress of all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.

The previous inspection report states that pupils behave in an exemplary manner. This continues to be the case. Pupils behave extremely well and you are rightly very proud of them. They are polite, well-mannered and eager to show off their good school. Pupils say that everyone gets along well together and that there is 'a happy atmosphere.'

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work that you and the rest of the staff do for their children. They hold the school in high regard and are very positive about how well their children are looked after and the progress that they make. A typical comment from a parent was: 'There isn't a day when she doesn't want to come to school.'

Pupils in your school are exceptionally well looked after and cared for. The work of the learning mentor ensures that vulnerable pupils are helped to learn. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate how to be a 'Harris pupil' through a variety of opportunities. For example, the 'lead learner' and 'lead greeter' in each class welcome visitors and share their learning with them.

The curriculum is broad and vibrant. You have planned a curriculum that allows pupils to experience a range of topics and it is enriched with a variety of extra-curricular activities, including drama, sport and music.

Safeguarding is effective.

You ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust. The support you give to vulnerable pupils is a strength of the school and the records that you keep are extremely detailed, particularly when there is a need to work alongside families and other professional agencies.

All who work in the school have received suitable training and are vigilant about the risks posed to pupils. You ensure that all checks are carried out to confirm that staff are suitable to work with children.

Pupils say that they feel safe and that they know how to keep themselves safe. For example, older pupils know how to protect themselves on social media because of the guidance they have received in school.

Inspection findings

- Strengths in the school's work have been maintained since the previous inspection. You have been successful in improving aspects of achievement. For example, there has been a marked improvement in the teaching of phonics, and results in 2016 in the Year 1 phonics check were particularly high.

- Results in reading in 2016 were not as good as those in writing. You have identified that pupils need to improve their understanding of the books that they read. Work to do this is well under way. You have restructured the way that you teach reading, and teachers probe and question pupils more deeply about their books. In addition, you are making better use of the school library and have employed a librarian to help pupils develop their love of reading further. The school's current assessment information indicates that all pupils are now making good progress in reading.
- Your school improvement plan is detailed and identifies areas for improvement. Nevertheless, it does not always clearly identify how you will measure how well each group of pupils is doing. Occasionally, you include improvements that have already been made, in order to embed them, rather than focusing on what might need further attention.
- In 2015 in early years, there was a marked difference in the performance of boys and girls. The proportion of girls achieving a good level of development exceeded that of boys. However, you wasted no time in addressing this issue and in 2016 this difference was eliminated. Pupils in early years make good progress from their starting positions.
- Teaching in key stage 1 has recently been strengthened. Work in pupils' books shows teachers' high expectations and pupils are making good progress. For example, in Year 1, pupils were able to plan and write about 'the owl who was afraid of the dark' and showed their perseverance at writing for length.
- Leaders are aware of the barriers to learning faced by some pupils. You and your learning mentor ensure that these pupils are well supported so that they attend school regularly and feel safe. The social and emotional support for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium grant is a strength of the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils did not achieve well in reading and mathematics in 2016. You and the governing body have correctly identified the need to closely monitor the spending of the pupil premium grant to ensure that it has a greater impact on the achievement of these pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- plans to further improve the school focus sharply on what to develop and how to measure the impact of their actions on all groups of pupils.
- they monitor and evaluate closely the impact of the pupil premium grant on the improved achievement for disadvantaged pupils.

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

Yours sincerely

Emma Jackson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met with you and other members of staff, including the deputy headteacher and senior leaders. I also met with members of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and spoke with parents at the end of the school day.

I took account of responses to the online questionnaires for pupils, parents and staff. I visited classrooms to observe pupils' learning and looked at their work in books. I reviewed information about pupils' progress and attainment, and the curriculum. I scrutinised the school's self-evaluation document and action plans and looked at safeguarding, including evaluating the impact of the school's procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.