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Mrs Jacqui Ames  
Headteacher  
Norbury Hall Primary School  
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Cheshire  
SK7 6LE

Dear Mrs Ames

### **Short inspection of Norbury Hall Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 15 June 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 April 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 provide motivational leadership based on a clear vision of pupils having ownership of their learning. The school's motto, 'learning and growing together', is at the heart of everyone's work. Staff share your high expectations. They work effectively together to drive up standards. Pupils are very well prepared for their secondary education.

Since the previous inspection, you have improved teaching and reviewed the curriculum to include topics which develop pupils' confidence, creativity and resilience. Pupils benefit from a variety of extra-curricular activities. These include drama, music and sport. Pupils commit to supporting a range of charities, including Action for Sick Children.

You are keen for the school to be outward-facing. You chair the primary head consortium and share the lead of the local school cluster. These partnership arrangements have enabled you and other leaders to share innovative practice, moderate writing assessments and organise projects for Year 6 and Year 7 pupils.

Governors are experienced and committed to the school. They know the school well, including its strengths and areas for development. Governors provide effective support and challenge so that the school continues to improve. Governors value your leadership highly.

While there were no pupil or staff responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, the pupils and staff I spoke to were very positive about the school. I saw lots of happy faces as I walked around the school. Pupils are polite, confident and articulate. They play sensibly and socialise well together during breaktimes. Pupils work hard in lessons and take pride in their work. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. As one pupil commented, 'Teachers make things fun. We love the chances and opportunities that they give us.'

Parents' views of the school are very positive. The overwhelming majority of those completing Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school to others. A typical comment was, 'Every child gets a chance to shine. The headteacher knows every child.'

You have responded well to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Best practice in teaching and learning is shared widely among staff in school and with other local schools. Pupils show interest in the work that they do because teaching provides a variety of approaches that sustains their interest. The leaders of the early years and key stage 1 have worked together to ensure a smooth transition for children as they move into Year 1. An increased focus on handwriting has ensured that standards of presentation are good. Teachers provide intervention groups to develop pupils' fine motor skills. You have developed a thematic approach to writing which promotes writing for a purpose.

Children in the early years make strong progress from their starting points. In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the Year 1 phonics screening check was above average. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 was also above average. You do, however, recognise that the number of middle-ability pupils reaching the higher standards at key stage 1 in 2016 could be higher in reading, writing and mathematics. You have introduced a number of appropriate initiatives to support pupils' strong progress.

In 2016, at the end of key stage 2, all pupils made at least expected progress in writing and mathematics, and progress in reading was significantly above the national average. Over time, progress in writing at key stage 2 is not as rapid as progress in reading and mathematics. You have taken effective steps to rectify this, and pupils' achievement in writing continues to improve further.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders create a strong culture of safeguarding through regular training, updates and displays of information in prominent areas. Leaders have adopted the culture of 'It could happen here' to safeguard pupils. Staff are aware of what they should do to help keep children safe, including from the risks associated with online bullying. The school site is safe and risk assessments are thorough. Leaders communicate well with families and other agencies. Referrals are made in a timely manner and any concerns are followed up effectively. Pupils understand different forms of bullying and they say that bullying is rare. They are knowledgeable about the risks

of using the internet and know what to do if they have a concern. The parents that I spoke with felt that their children are safe and well cared for.

## **Inspection findings**

- You recognised that in 2016, middle-ability pupils and the most able pupils did not make enough progress in attaining the higher standards in writing at the end of key stage 2. You have introduced a range of initiatives to improve pupils' progress. The use of themes such as 'Winston's what ifs' and 'Britannia's brain teasers' engage pupils' interests and provide them with the opportunity to apply skills across the curriculum. Topics are further enriched by an interesting range of trips, for example visits to a local zoo and an adventure park. You have improved training for staff on grammar and the moderation of pupils' assessments. My review of pupils' books shows that pupils write with increased fluency and complete extended pieces of work well. You acknowledge that while writing is improving across the school, this remains an area for further development.
- Middle-ability pupils did not perform as well as their peers nationally at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2016. You identified this and implemented a number of strategies to improve their progress. You have purchased a range of home school reading books. Pupils who read to me were able to read fluently and with expression. Scrutiny of reading records shows that pupils enjoy reading regularly. Teachers support children to structure their writing using a variety of techniques. There is a whole-school focus on improving problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics. Breakfast booster groups and additional support from teaching assistants have deepened pupils' learning.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils did not make enough progress in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. You have spent the pupil premium funding carefully to break down barriers to learning and to help disadvantaged pupils catch up. Teachers hold regular meetings to track pupils' progress and organise extra support for those pupils who may have fallen behind. Specialist speech and language support helps those pupils with specific learning difficulties to improve their communication skills and accelerate their progress.
- Overall attendance is currently above the national figure. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was low in 2016. This was due to some specific factors, including illness. Your team works closely with families and follows up pupil absence quickly. The impact of this work is clearly evident in the improved attendance of individual pupils.
- My review of your information about how well pupils are doing, my scrutiny of pupils' work and my discussions with pupils indicate that most of the activities set by teachers are closely matched to the ability of the pupils. However, you acknowledged that there is further work to do to ensure that the most able pupils are challenged to achieve as well as they should.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the standards pupils reach in writing by the end of key stage 2 continue to improve
- the most able pupils are challenged to achieve the highest possible standards.

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

Yours sincerely

Ahmed Marikar  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this short inspection I met with you, the deputy headteacher and a group of middle leaders and teachers. I met with three members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority. I spoke with eight pupils from key stage 2 and I talked to others during breaktimes. I visited a number of classes, where I observed teaching and learning, looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. I also heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. I carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work across the school. I spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. I took account of 119 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, including 119 freetext responses. No responses were received to the online questionnaires for staff and pupils. I looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' attainment and progress. I also evaluated safeguarding procedures, including policies to keep children safe, records of training, safeguarding checks and attendance and behaviour information. I also undertook a review of the school's website.